



# TOGETHER, *success!*

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services  
2001 Annual Report

# BLUEPRINT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

## **MISSION: TO ENABLE ALABAMA'S CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL**

### **We VALUE the worth, dignity and rights of people with disabilities and we will:**

- provide an easily accessible, integrated continuum of services;
- ensure quality services that are family-centered, culturally sensitive and community-based;
- promote and respect consumer choice regarding provision of services;
- advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and promote self-advocacy;
- include people with disabilities, their families and advocates in agency planning and policy development.

### **We VALUE independence and meaningful work for people with disabilities and we will:**

- educate families, children, employers, schools and the public that people with disabilities can and do work;
- advocate for quality health services and community supports that enable people with disabilities to work and/or function independently;
- develop, maintain and expand working relationships with employers;
- identify and create job opportunities that are compatible with consumer abilities;
- foster cross-divisional collaboration to achieve successful work outcomes.

### **We VALUE all staff and their contributions in achieving our mission and we will:**

- communicate openly and honestly;
- recruit, develop, retain and promote a diverse, qualified staff;
- involve staff in agency planning, policy development and performance objectives;
- recognize and reward exemplary job performance;
- provide staff opportunities for personal and professional growth.

### **We VALUE leadership at all levels and we will:**

- maximize staff participation in all agency initiatives;
- create an environment which encourages and supports creativity and innovation;
- facilitate teamwork among all staff;
- provide support and leadership development opportunities.

### **We VALUE maximum acquisition and efficient and effective management of resources and we will:**

- acquire maximum resources;
- increase legislative support;
- develop and use appropriate technological advancements;
- evaluate the effective and efficient use of our resources;
- collaborate with organizations in the public and private sectors.

### **We VALUE public support and we will:**

- educate the public about our mission, goals, services and expertise;
- secure support from business and industry, consumers of services, partners and policymakers;
- create partnerships that expand services to enhance opportunities for consumers;
- maximize staff involvement in the development of grassroots support.

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## Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

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# COMMISSIONER'S LETTER

Dear friends,

We've done it again – together! Once again we have been successful in reaching new heights of providing service and assistance for our consumers, Alabamians with disabilities and their families. I am proud to present to you, *Together Success!*, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' annual report for Fiscal Year 2001, which outlines many of our accomplishments of the past year.



STEVE SHIVERS  
Commissioner

In *Together, Success!*, we offer a statistical report on the growing number of children and adults with disabilities in Alabama whose lives are improved through the ADRS “continuum of services” and the contributions of our many partners – public and private – who are so important to our consumers’ successes. Those successes are a permanent record of and living tribute to the hard work and personal dedication of the department’s professional staff. Their knowledge, experience and compassion, combined with their innovative management of limited funding, are reflected in the accomplishments of the individuals and families they serve, whether in school, at home or on the job.

To help bring the statistics to life, *Together Success!* introduces to you some of our consumers whose personal stories of triumph embody the spirit of this department.

I extend my congratulations and gratitude to the ADRS staff, our community partners, and our advocates and supporters in the Legislature for a year of outstanding achievement. And I invite you to join with us as we continue to pursue our mission: *to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Shivers".

# BOARD CHAIRWOMAN'S MESSAGE

My dear friends,

What a remarkable year it's been! And how blessed I am – as chairwoman of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services – to have been able to observe firsthand the life-changing impact the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services once again had on the lives of Alabama's children and adults with disabilities.

As always, it was inspiring to see the results of the unwavering commitment of ADRS staff to helping Alabamians of all ages achieve their maximum potential. And as the mother of daughters with disabilities, I am keenly aware of the profound affect that ADRS programs can have on people who face seemingly impossible circumstances.

As you read through this year's annual report, you'll see beyond the numbers to the individual lives that have been changed by ADRS. You'll read about people like Roosevelt Wright, who – because of the collaborative efforts of Children's Rehabilitation Service and Vocational Rehabilitation Service — is a student at the University of Alabama Huntsville, working toward a degree in aerospace engineering. You'll learn about Morgan Ray, a youngster with a severe seizure disorder, who attends a school three blocks from her home because of CRS involvement. You'll meet Reginald Lewis, a Tuscaloosa man with quadriplegia who is able to maintain his independence and pursue a college degree because of the SAIL (Homebound) service. Their lives bear witness to the theme of this annual report – *Together, Success!*. Through the combined efforts of ADRS staff members and agencies as well as organizations and rehabilitation programs around the state, the lives of tens of thousands of Alabamians with disabilities were enriched – children kept pace with their peers, students attended school, adolescents and adults entered the workplace.

I invite you to celebrate with us the successes retold in these pages. I'm sure you will agree that it was, indeed, a remarkable year.



PATRICIA  
'CRICKETT' FLOYD  
District 3

*Patricia "Crickett" Floyd*

## ALABAMA BOARD OF REHABILITATION SERVICES



JOHN SHACKLEFORD  
District 1



DAVID BROCK  
District 4



JAMES BROWN, JR.  
District 5



ROGER McCULLOUGH  
District 6



BERNICE WASHINGTON  
District 7

\*The board seat for District 2 is vacant.

# Unique in the nation, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is comprised of state and federal programs that provide a continuum of services from birth through life for Alabamians with disabilities.

Operationally, ADRS programs function within three divisions:

## Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS)

- EI coordinates services statewide for infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays from birth to age 3, preparing them and their families for the transition to the State Department of Education's preschool program for 3- to 5-year-olds.

- EI provides financial and technical support to the more than 60 community programs that provide direct early intervention services.

## Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS)

- CRS provides services to children with special health-care needs from birth to age 21 and their families.



- CRS provides disability services, expertise and adaptive technology to local school systems, assisting teachers and school nurses in the education of children with special health-care needs.

- CRS also administers the statewide *Hemophilia Program*,

which serves Alabama's children and adults who have this life-threatening blood disorder.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS)

- VRS, the department's largest division, provides

rehabilitation, education and employment-related services to more than 40,000 adolescents and adults with disabilities through long-standing partnerships with local school systems, colleges and universities, junior colleges, vocational technical schools and community rehabilitation programs.

- VRS also provides nearly 5,700 disability management and employee placement

services to Alabama businesses each year.

The *Business Enterprise Program* achieved more than \$17 million in gross sales for the program's 131 blind managers in FY 2001.

The *SAIL (State of Alabama Independent Living)/Homebound Service* is housed within the VRS division and provides services to Alabamians who have the severest disabilities resulting from spinal cord or head injuries.





ALABAMA'S **EARLY**  
**INTERVENTION** SYSTEM

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# Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) coordinates a statewide system of services and supports for infants and toddlers with a substantial delay in a major area of development or a condition that has a high probability of resulting in delay.

With the assistance of eight other state agencies working through the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC), community service providers and the families of children served by AEIS, the system provides a coordinated, family-centered system of services.

AEIS staff members begin early to encourage families who have young children with developmental delays to become involved in community activities that already exist for young children, if possible. Providing early intervention for infants and toddlers in their “natural” environments is a very important part of their learning process.

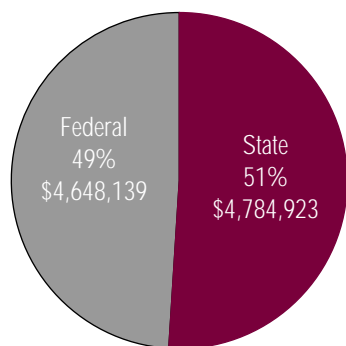
In home and community settings, such as child-care centers, mother's-day-out programs or city parks, youngsters with disabilities are able to become involved in activities with their nondisabled peers. AEIS works together with families, community organizations, and public and private service providers to help with development.

To be eligible for early intervention services, a child must be younger than 3 years old and exhibit a 25 percent or greater delay in one or more of the five developmental areas (cognitive, physical, adaptive, social/emotional, speech/language) or have a diagnosed condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Infants and toddlers may be referred to AEIS by calling the toll-free Early Intervention Child Find hotline, 1-800-543-3098.

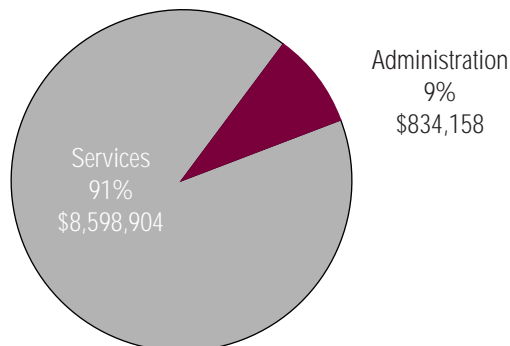


## AEIS: BY THE NUMBERS

Source of Revenue: \$9,433,062



Use of Revenue: \$9,433,062



# EARLY INTERVENTION

## 2001 SUCCESSES

### Provided Services to More Families

- Provided services to 3,843 infants and toddlers and their families, 305 more than in FY 2000
- Provided financial support and technical assistance to more than 60 local community early intervention programs and service coordination agencies statewide
- Provided AEIS materials and forms in Spanish and coordinated outreach for the state's growing Hispanic population
- Conducted family satisfaction surveys, securing greater than an 80 percent response rate
- Developed and initiated a survey of families who have transitioned from AEIS to 3-5 programs with the state Department of Education

### Improved and Expanded Services

- Increased referrals of children needing early intervention services (through joint efforts with Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Human Resources, Alabama Department of Public Health and the Social Security Administration)
- Conducted 11 statewide transition workshops in collaboration with the State Department of Education
- Distributed more than 62,000 AEIS outreach materials requested by families, organizations and agencies
- Provided more than 45 workshops and seminars statewide for AEIS families and professionals
- Provided statewide information about AEIS workshops, conferences and resources access through the ADRS website ([www.rehab.state.al.us](http://www.rehab.state.al.us))



### Enhanced Staff Qualifications

- Continued emphasis on recruiting qualified professionals to expand service delivery
- Collaborated with Auburn University for a preservice curriculum to prepare professional staff for AEIS
- Conducted inservice curriculum with the University of South Alabama to expand the number of qualified providers of special instruction
- Initiated the AEIS staff self-assessment process with the federal Office of Special Education in coordination with 15 families, providers and ICC agency staff, and coordinated 10 public forums across the state for families, AEIS service coordinators, administrators and providers. Of the programs reviewed in fiscal year 2001, 84 percent were found to be providing services and supports to children and families in natural environments.

## AEIS: GROWING WITH THE FUTURE

	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002*</u>
Referrals	2,385	2,769	2,812	3,184	3,190
Eligible	1,553	1,754	1,804	1,947	1,955
Served	3,090	3,379	3,538	3,843	3,900

\* Projected

# EARLY INTERVENTION SUCCESS STORY

## *TAYLOR MORRIS*

Mimi Morris grew up during a time when children with disabilities were seen but not heard, educated in separate classrooms, away from other children.

“We were taught to be afraid of children who were different,” she said.

So learning her newborn daughter had Cri du Chat syndrome — a genetic abnormality often resulting in mental retardation, severe speech-language delays and slow physical development — was especially difficult.

“When I found out Taylor had a problem, I was afraid of her for a short time,” Morris said.

“That has been the biggest learning and growing experience — that I had some issues I did not know I had.”

Add to that the bleak future described by one doctor: “He said, ‘We think your daughter has a chromosome abnormality. It’s not a good thing. Most children with this are institutionalized. She may not even know you.’ It was just awful.”

The experience has been made easier, though, in large part because of Alabama’s Early Intervention System, which directed the Morrisses to the Shelby ARC, one of the more than 60 AEIS programs around the state. The organization entered the picture when Taylor was only 2 weeks old and has been involved with the child and her family ever since.

“They helped me to see my life was not over,” Morris said, “that the sun was going to come up the next day.”

Through the program, Taylor, who turned 2 in October, receives occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy and special instruction, which aids in cognitive development.

In addition to Shelby ARC, Mimi and her husband, Mark, have also gotten involved with the Cri du Chat syndrome society, which has put the couple in contact with other families facing similar situations. After meeting other parents, the job of raising a child with special needs didn’t seem so daunting. “I thought, ‘I can do this,’ ” Morris said.

She’s also seen firsthand that things aren’t as grim as the doctor described — at least not for Taylor. Her daughter has already exceeded expectations; she walks, speaks a few words and is described by her mother as a “goer.” All of which makes the young woman optimistic about the youngster’s future.

“There’s a little girl in Mississippi who is in the top reading group in her class, and she’s in a typical class,” Morris said. “So, I’m just believing that for Taylor.”



# EARLY INTERVENTION

## PROGRAMS

*As part of Alabama's Early Intervention System, the following is a list of program locations for fiscal year 2001. These programs provided supports and services to eligible families in the counties surrounding the city listed.*

### **ANNISTON**

ARC of Calhoun and Cleburne County  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District III  
East Central Alabama UCP Center, Inc.

### **ANDALUSIA**

Children's Rehabilitation Service, District V  
South Central Alabama Mental Health/Mental Retardation Board, Inc.

### **ATHENS**

ARC of Limestone

### **AUBURN**

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region VI  
Project AIM

### **BIRMINGHAM**

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region III  
ARC of Jefferson County, Inc.  
Children's Health System Early Intervention Program  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District II  
The Children's Hospital of Alabama  
Mental Retardation Developmental Disabilities and Health Care  
Authority of Jefferson County  
UCP of Greater Birmingham

### **CULLMAN**

Cullman County Center for Developmentally Disabled, Inc.

### **DECATUR**

Early Childhood Services of Centers for the Developmentally Disabled  
North Central Alabama Mental Retardation Authority

### **DOTHAN**

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region VIII  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District V  
Dothan-Houston County Mental Retardation Board, Inc.  
(Vaughn Blumberg Center)

### **EUFAULA**

Barbour County Early Intervention Program

### **GADSDEN**

Children's Rehabilitation Service, District III  
Merle Wallace Purvis Center  
UCP of Greater Birmingham

### **GUNTERSVILLE**

Marshall/Jackson Mental Retardation Authority

### **HUNTSVILLE**

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region II  
ARC of Madison County  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District I  
Madison County Mental Retardation Board  
UCP of Huntsville and Tennessee Valley

### **JACKSON**

Children's Rehabilitation Service, District VI

### **JASPER**

ARC of Walker County

### **LOXLEY**

UCP of Mobile (Sunrise Program)

### **McINTOSH**

UCP of Mobile (New Journey)

### **MOBILE**

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region IX  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District VI  
Easter Seal School for Special Children  
University of South Alabama Women's and Children's Hospital  
Therapy Services Department  
UCP of Mobile (Project Special Delivery)

### **MONROEVILLE**

Southwest Alabama Mental Health/Mental Retardation Board, Inc.

### **MONTGOMERY**

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region VII  
Children's Center of Montgomery, Inc.  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District IV  
The H.O.P.E. Project  
Maxwell Air Force Base Early Intervention Program  
Montgomery Area Services for MR

### **MUSCLE SHOALS**

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region I  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District I  
Shoals Committee on Programs and Employment for the  
Mentally Retarded 310 Authority (SCOPE)

### **ONEONTA**

UCP of Greater Birmingham

### **OPELIKA**

ABC Program  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District IV  
East Alabama Mental Health/Mental Retardation Board

### **OZARK**

Vivian B. Adams School

### **PELHAM**

Shelby County ARC/Kids First

### **PELL CITY**

UCP of Greater Birmingham

### **PRATTVILLE**

ARC of Autauga/Western Elmore County

### **ROBERTSDALE**

Baldwin County Mental Retardation Board, Inc.

### **SCOTTSBORO**

Marshall/Jackson Mental Retardation Board

### **SELMA**

Cahaba Center Early Intervention  
Cahaba Mental Health Center  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District VI

### **SHEFFIELD**

UCP of Northwest Alabama

### **TALLADEGA**

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region IV  
Burton Developmental Center  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District III

### **TROY**

UCP of Mobile (Bright Beginnings)

### **TUSCALOOSA**

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region V  
Children's Rehabilitation Service, District VII  
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc.  
RISE Program

### **VALLEY**

Valley Haven School

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### STATE OFFICE

2129 E. South Blvd., Montgomery, 36116-2455  
334-281-8780, 1-800-543-3098  
334-613-3541 (fax)  
Child Find Hotline: 1-800-543-3098  
[www.rehab.state.al.us](http://www.rehab.state.al.us)

### BIRMINGHAM

236 Goodwin Crest Drive  
P.O. Drawer 2328, 35201-2328  
205-290-4552, 1-888-430-7423  
205-943-9302 (fax)  
Counties: Cullman, Jefferson, Shelby, Walker

### DOTHAN

P.O. Drawer 1627  
795 Ross Clark Circle, NE, 36303  
334-792-0022, 1-800-677-9123  
334-702-8442 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Butler, Coffee, Conecuh,  
Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry,  
Houston

### HUNTSVILLE

407 Governors Drive, SW  
Suite B, 35801-5125  
256-518-8661, 1-800-283-9352  
256-518-9702 (fax)  
Counties: Colbert, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale,  
Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall,  
Morgan, Winston

### MONTGOMERY

2127 E. South Blvd., 36116-2456  
334-613-3476, 1-800-441-7607, ext. 476  
334-613-3541 (fax)  
Counties: Autauga, Bullock, Chambers, Chilton,  
Coosa, Elmore, Lee, Lowndes, Macon,  
Montgomery, Pike, Randolph, Russell, Tallapoosa

### MOBILE

1610 Center St., Suite A, 36604  
251-478-7640, 1-800-879-8163  
251-476-3807 (fax)  
Counties: Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Escambia,  
Mobile, Monroe, Washington

### TALLADEGA

7 Bemiston Ave., 35160  
256-362-5832, 1-800-947-7140  
256-362-6941 (fax)  
Counties: Blount, DeKalb, Calhoun, Cherokee, Clay,  
Cleburne, Etowah, St. Clair, Talladega

### TUSCALOOSA

1110 Sixth Ave., East, 35401  
205-759-1279, 1-800-723-0490  
205-344-4072 (fax)  
Counties: Bibb, Dallas, Fayette, Greene, Hale,  
Lamar, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter,  
Tuscaloosa, Wilcox



**CHILDREN'S**  
REHABILITATION SERVICE

# Children's Rehabilitation Service provides medical and care coordination to children with special health-care needs in homes, schools and other community settings.

Through its six programs, CRS services can be accessed at different times during a child's life.

- **Information and referral:** links families to community resources and services.
- **Clinical evaluation:** identifies the unique needs of a child with feeding problems, communication challenges or special diagnostic needs.



- **Clinical medical:** operates specialty clinics throughout the state.
- **Patient/family education:** provides information necessary to carry out treatment regimens and to make informed choices about services.
- **Care coordination:** assists the child and family in identifying, accessing and utilizing community resources to effectively meet their individual needs.
- **Parent connection:** provides a network of family support.

Services are available to any Alabama resident with

special health-care needs who is younger than 21, while consumers with hemophilia are eligible for services into adulthood. Families can receive services regardless of their income. Financial participation is on a sliding scale, based on each family's needs.

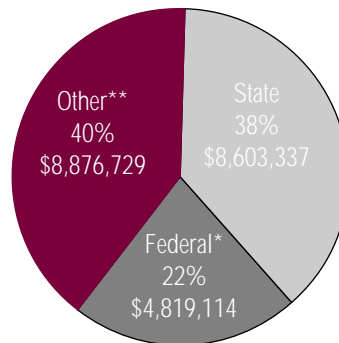
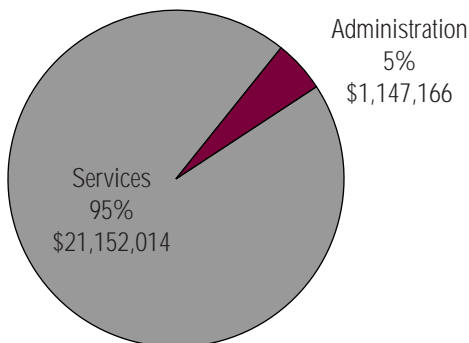
Treatment options vary, ranging from clinical interventions and medication to specialized equipment and therapy services.

Fifteen community-based offices provide a team approach, bringing together health-care specialists from many fields to provide services tailored for each individual family.



## CRS: BY THE NUMBERS

Source of Revenue: \$22,299,180      Use of Revenue: \$22,299,180



\*Federal grants; \*\*Medicaid, insurance reimbursements

# CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION SERVICE

## 2001 SUCCESSES

### Increased Service to Children and Families

- Provided services to more than 23,000 children with special health-care needs and their families, including 14,288 children through our CRS clinical programs
- Provided services to 2,210 children with special health-care needs who had no other resource for specialty care
- Provided expanded services to more than 226 children with traumatic brain injury \*
- Provided services to 273 patients with hemophilia, a 5 percent increase over FY 2000

### Improved system of care for children with special needs

- Expanded benefits to children with special needs through All-Kids Plus coverage (CHIP), in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Public Health
- Expanded transition services for adolescents with disabilities through a multidisciplinary Teen Transition Clinic and a referral program with Vocational Rehabilitation Service
- Participated in Medicaid's Dental Advisory Committee to improve access and reimbursements for children's dental needs

### Expanded role with students and schools

- Assisted teachers in educating children with special health-care needs by providing nursing, social work, audiology, nutrition and physical therapy services to local school systems
- Educated teachers, career tech and vocational/tech school professionals on methods of helping students with disabilities in the classroom
- Provided individualized education plan (IEP) workshops to parents, school personnel and other professionals at five locations around the state
- Provided disability expertise to school nurses statewide regarding children with special health-care needs



### Increased use of technology

- Provided expertise and assistive technology, including digital programmable hearing aids, to students and teachers in Alabama school systems to assist children with disabilities in the classroom
- Provided equipment repair and refurbishing prior to start of the school year for children with special health-care needs in Huntsville, Opelika, Dothan and other areas

\*Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is the leading cause of disability and death in children and adolescents in the United States. Of all pediatric injury cases, about one-third are related to brain injury.

## CRS: GROWING WITH THE FUTURE

Average Number of Children Served Per Quarter: 12,925

Number of New Children Served: 2,448

Number of Encounters with Physicians, Dentists, Staff: 68,580

Number of Uninsured Children Served: 2,210

Average Number of SSI Beneficiaries Under 16 Years Served: 3,702

Information and Referral Calls Fielded: 10,056

Average Number of Infants and Toddlers Served: 1,594

Number of Service Encounters in Hemophilia Program: 2,314

Number of Clients in Hemophilia Program: 273

Number of Clinics Held: 1,405

# CRS SUCCESS STORY

## MORGAN RAY

Many parents of children with special health-care needs aren't sure where to turn for guidance, services, answers. Such was the case for Kip and Jackie Ray.

"We were lost," said Kip Ray. "We didn't know who to call, where to go."

The Bessemer man spent two to three hours on the telephone each day trying to find services for his daughter Morgan, who had been diagnosed at 2 years old with Lennox Gastaut syndrome, a severe form of epilepsy characterized by seizures and developmental delays.

Finally, in April 1999, Ray found Sharron Richards, a social worker in Birmingham's CRS office.

"Up to that point, Sharron was the only one who sincerely wanted to help," said Ray.

Prior to CRS involvement, the Rays had been taking Morgan to Tuscaloosa each weekday — a two-hour round trip — for school. Weeks later, Richards arranged for Morgan, now 8 years old, to attend a school just three blocks from her home. Since then, CRS has helped in other ways, such as enrolling the family for home health respite services and providing the family with diapers, a bath seat, a car seat, access to a

nutritionist, and information on resources in their area. In addition, Morgan attends CRS feeding and orthopedic clinics.

"The help from CRS has allowed me to focus on fund-raising for other items that Morgan needs," Ray said, adding that community donations have helped the family buy a specially equipped van and an indoor lift that assists him and his wife in moving Morgan.

The assistance has been an emotional relief, as well.

"It's wonderful to know Morgan is getting exactly what she needs to help her have the best quality of life, to help her achieve all she can within her realm," he said.



# CRS SUCCESS STORY

## *THE NAUGHTONS*

When their second child was born with cystic fibrosis two years ago, John and Tonya Naughton were familiar with caring for a child with special health-care needs. Their oldest child, Lexi, had been diagnosed at 15 months with the disease, which causes the body to produce an abnormally thick and sticky mucus in the lungs and other organs that clogs airways and often leads to life-threatening infections. But Brannon's case was different from his older sister's.



"Brannon was the scary one," said Tonya Naughton. "We didn't think he was going to live."

Unlike Lexi, Brannon's problems were evident immediately. The infant showed early signs of liver failure almost from birth. In fact, the Mobile couple feared their son would require a transplant to survive. Then, after months of trial and error with various medications, the outlook improved.

Now, Naughton said, Brannon is the same as anyone with CF. "I don't see a transplant in his future."

The Naughtons credit CRS with helping to improve their children's lives, especially by supplying the costly medications which are vital to keeping a child with CF healthy.

Between them, Lexi and Brannon take 30 medications daily.

CRS also has helped in less-tangible ways, Naughton said.

"As soon as Lexi was diagnosed, Joane (Holloway, CRS social worker) was there," she said.

"Then, when we learned Brannon had CF too, she came to the hospital and stayed with me. She's been there in really hard times."

As a stay-at-home mom, Tonya has been able to focus full-time attention on her children, even organizing a walk-a-thon to raise money to find a cure for cystic fibrosis.

And her children appreciate her efforts. Lexi especially understands how much her mother has worked to raise money for research. Recently, when several children were discussing their mother's jobs, Lexi told the kids that her mom, too, has a job. When her mother tried to correct her, the 4-year-old said, "You *do* work. You work to make CF go away."



# CRS HEMOPHILIA PROGRAM

## 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

The Alabama Hemophilia Program (AHP), established in 1975 within Children's Rehabilitation Service of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, provides medical treatment, factor replacement and comprehensive community-based services for children and adults with hemophilia. The program's service area covers the entire state, with three-fourths of the client population attending the hemophilia treatment center in Birmingham, and the remaining one-fourth participating in the clinic at the Mobile hemophilia treatment center. These treatment centers are staffed by physicians who are faculty members of the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and the University of South Alabama (USA) in Mobile.

Hemophilia affects predominantly males. The major types of this hereditary disease are Hemophilia A (factor VIII deficiency) and Hemophilia B (factor IX deficiency), which are diagnosed as being mild, moderate or severe. In addition to serving people who have hemophilia, AHP also provides services to people with other bleeding disorders. The most common of these is Von Willebrand disease, a condition which affects women as often as it affects men. Infusion therapy, or the intravenous injection of clotting factor, is recognized as the best treatment for hemophilia. Community-based services offered through AHP include care coordination, family support, client/family education, information and referral, home visiting, nursing care, nutritional assessment and counseling, and physical therapy evaluation and therapy as ordered.

In FY 2001, the Alabama Hemophilia Program:

- Served 274 individuals – 234 males and 40 females
- Established educational resource centers at the two Hemophilia Treatment Centers and the Hemophilia Treatment Center satellite office
- Served 39 uninsured participants
- Offered two Montgomery satellite clinics
- Provided participants with more than 4 million units of clotting factor for treatment, at a cost of more than \$2 million

In addition to funding received through the Alabama Legislature, the AHP also receives a comprehensive care grant funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, which totals \$28,700.

## CRS SERVICES

- Service coordination
- Physical therapy
- Speech/language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Hospitalization/surgery
- Social work services
- Patient education/parent resource centers
- Nursing services
- Nutrition counseling
- Assistive technology
- Low-vision services
- Medical services
- Audiological services
- Special dental and orthodontic services
- Laboratory testing
- Medication



# CRS SUCCESS STORY

## *THE GILCHRISTS*

For Plinnie and Danny Gilchrist of Waterloo, a small community on the Tennessee River in extreme Northwest Alabama, Children's Rehabilitation Service has truly been a family affair. The relationship began with the birth of their first child, Daniel.

Their son needed extensive surgery to repair his cleft lip and palate, but they could not afford the expense. Not knowing where to turn, the Gilchrists heard about CRS from a family friend who also had a child with the same disability. Plinnie remembers the first time they took Daniel to the CRS clinic some 50 miles away in Muscle Shoals.

"They welcomed us and treated our child like their own," said Plinnie. "Finding out about CRS was an answered prayer."

Five years later, the Gilchrists welcomed their twin daughters into the world. Darah and Dana were beautiful, healthy infants other than being born with the same problems as their brother. Once again, CRS was their salvation, providing surgeries, orthodontic care, and therapies for both girls, just as CRS was still doing for Daniel.

Today, Daniel is a ninth-grader at Central High School in Florence. His grades are above average and he is a budding star athlete, especially on the baseball diamond. In fact, Daniel is counting on his pitching arm to win him a college scholarship.

His twin sisters are also at Central and, like their brother, show promising athletic potential as members of the Chipmunks softball team.

All three still attend CRS clinics, which have been a life-saver, their mother said.

"Having all the specialists in one place has made it so much easier," said Plinnie. "I can take all the kids to just one clinic for their medical attention — dental and orthodontic work, reconstructive surgery, and their speech and hearing therapy."

Plinnie also has become an advocate for other families by helping them find the services they need at CRS.

CRS has also helped the children in other ways.

"We have been very involved with the children and their school," said CRS Social Worker Ann Cole. "Because they have needed speech and hearing therapy through the years, communication with their teachers has been very important. I know the teachers consider our involvement as helpful to them as it is to the kids."

As for the Gilchrist children themselves, they hardly notice their disability, their mother said.

"The kids aren't bothered," she said. "I really think having to overcome their physical challenges has made them stronger, taught them to be fighters."

"They have learned that you don't give up, no matter what."

And she credits CRS staff for their role in helping all three of her children gain that self-confidence.

"I count my blessings every day for CRS being here to help us," she said. "They really have become a second family to us."



# CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION SERVICE

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### STATE OFFICE

2129 E. South Blvd., Montgomery  
36116-2455  
334-281-8780, 1-800-846-3697  
334-613-3553 (fax)  
www.rehab.state.al.us

### ANDALUSIA

580 West Bypass, 36420-2130  
334-222-5558, 1-800-723-8064  
334-427-1216 (fax)  
Counties: Butler, Crenshaw,  
Conecuh, Covington

### ANNISTON

1010 Christine Ave., Suite 250  
36207-5710  
256-235-3050, 1-800-289-9533  
256-238-9875 (fax)  
Counties: Calhoun, Cherokee,  
Clay, Cleburne

### BIRMINGHAM

236 Goodwin Crest Drive, 35201-2328  
205-290-4550, 1-888-430-7423  
205-290-4560 (fax)  
Medical Center: 205-939-5900  
Counties: Cullman, Jefferson,  
Shelby, Walker

### DOTHAN

795 Ross Clark Circle, NE  
P.O. Drawer 1627, 36303  
334-792-0022, 1-800-677-9123  
334-702-8442 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Coffee, Dale,  
Geneva, Henry, Houston

### GADSDEN

1100 George Wallace Drive  
35903-6501  
256-547-8653, 1-800-289-1353  
256-547-3513 (fax)  
Counties: Blount, DeKalb, Etowah

### HUNTSVILLE

407 Governors Drive, SW  
Suite B, 35801-5125  
256-518-8640, 1-800-283-9352  
256-518-9702 (fax)  
Counties: Jackson, Limestone,  
Madison, Marshall, Morgan

### JACKSON

1401 Forest Ave., P.O. Box 1005  
36545  
251-246-4025, 1-800-283-8140  
251-246-5224 (fax)  
Counties: Choctaw, Clarke,  
Monroe, Washington

### MOBILE

1610 Center St., Suite A,  
36604  
251-479-8617, 1-800-879-8163  
251-450-5037 (fax)  
Counties: Baldwin, Escambia, Mobile

### MONTGOMERY

2127 E. South Blvd., 36116-2456  
334-288-0220, 1-800-568-9034  
334-613-2365 (fax)  
Counties: Autauga, Bullock,  
Chilton, Coosa, Elmore, Lowndes,  
Montgomery, Pike

### MUSCLE SHOALS

1450 E. Avalon Ave., 35661-6108  
256-381-1212, 1-800-285-9924  
256-386-7338 (fax)  
Counties: Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale,  
Lawrence, Marion, Winston

### OPELIKA

516 W. Thomason Circle  
36801-5499  
334-745-7579, 1-800-568-8428  
334-749-3530 (fax)  
Counties: Chambers, Lee, Macon,  
Randolph, Russell, Tallapoosa

### SELMA

2906 Citizens Parkway  
P.O. Box 750, 36701  
334-872-8422, 1-800-967-6876  
334-877-3796 (fax)  
Counties: Dallas, Marengo, Perry, Wilcox

### TALLADEGA

7 Bemiston Ave., 35160  
256-362-9254, 1-800-947-7140  
256-362-6941 (fax)  
Counties: St. Clair, Talladega

### TUSCALOOSA

1110 Sixth Ave., East  
P.O. Drawer 2817, 35401  
205-759-1279, 1-800-723-0490  
205-344-4072 (fax)  
Counties: Bibb, Fayette, Greene,  
Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Sumter,  
Tuscaloosa



**VOCATIONAL**  
REHABILITATION SERVICE

# Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) provides specialized employment- and education-related services and training to assist teens and adults with disabilities in becoming employed.

The largest division within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, VRS markets its trained, job-ready clients and a wide range of consultant services to Alabama's business community. The division offers specialized employment-related assistance to more than 40,000 adults and adolescents with disabilities each year. In addition, VRS works with middle schools, high schools, junior colleges and universities statewide to assist students with disabilities in receiving appropriate educational opportunities.

The types of services available through VRS are as varied as the people it serves and are designed specifically to meet the needs of each individual. Available through any of the 21 VRS offices statewide, services can include vocational assessment, evaluation and counseling; medical treatment; job training; assistive technology; orientation and mobility training; and job placement. To be eligible for VRS services, individuals must have a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment and must be able to benefit from services in terms of going to work.



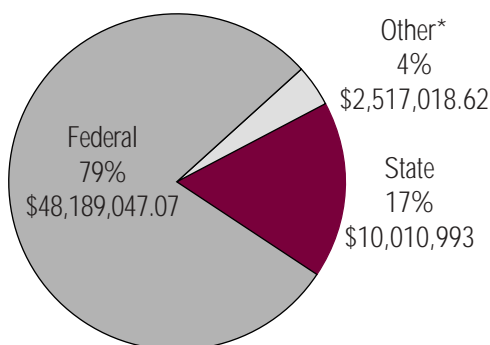
Employment is the goal for every VRS participant, regardless of age or disability. In fiscal year 2001, a record-setting 7,692 people with disabilities achieved their dream of employment, thanks to VRS services. VRS helps each person match his or her talents with the right career. Then, VRS links the person to its extensive network of employers through its Employer Account System.

VRS is a vast, coordinated network that creates a remarkable return on taxpayers' investment. For each dollar expended on a VRS consumer who becomes employed, \$20.64 is returned to the economy through employment.\* And for Alabamians with disabilities, VRS represents much more than a monetary return. Employment means pride, dignity and independence — being empowered to achieve one's maximum potential.

*\*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration*

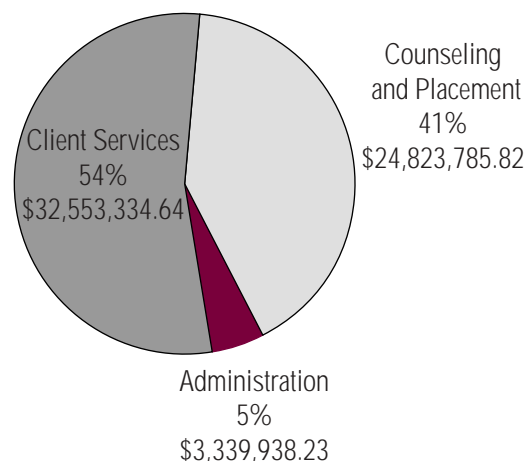
## VRS: BY THE NUMBERS

Source of Revenue: \$60,717,058.69



\*Social Security reimbursements

Use of Revenue: \$60,717,058.69



# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE

## 2001 SUCCESSES

### Served More Consumers

- Provided services to 42,349 Alabamians, with services including rehabilitation, education and employment-related services (35 percent are students)
- Assisted a record 7,692 Alabamians with disabilities in becoming successfully employed
- Return on investment: for each \$1 expended on successfully rehabilitating a consumer, \$20.64 is returned to the economy through his or her employment\*
- Expanded a welfare-to-work employment program for hard-to-serve TANF recipients with disabilities from 20 to 33 counties (with Department of Human Resources and Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs)
- Developed and implemented the Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Registry for survivors of spinal cord and traumatic brain injury in Alabama (with Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama Head Injury Foundation, and the UAB Center for Injury Sciences)

### Assisted Students and Teachers

- Served more than 14,000 Alabama students with disabilities in transition from school to work
- Increased the number of jointly funded job coaches to serve 75 school systems (\$1.3 million funded by ADRS, \$1.2 million funded by local school systems)
- Educated teachers, career tech and vocational/tech school professionals on means and methods of helping students with disabilities prepare for the labor market

### Collaborated with Businesses and Employers

- Provided 5,691 disability management and employee placement services to Alabama businesses
- Upgraded the statewide VRS Internet Job Bank and Applicant Pool for people with disabilities, electronically linking Alabama employers and people with disabilities
- Expanded commitment to One-Stop Career centers through increased staff and resources to provide disability services and expertise to consumers with disabilities, employers and other agencies
- Appointed a state coordinator to facilitate improvement of RAVE (Retaining a Valued Employee), the agency's newest service to employers

### Expanded Technology

- Provided rehabilitation technology assistance to students and teachers, consumers applying for jobs, and to employers for their employees with disabilities
- Expanded cost-saving efforts to recycle rehabilitation equipment and technology
- Upgraded SMILE, case management software which provides electronic linkage through the Internet and to other agencies, expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities and reducing the need for extensive clerical support

### VRS SERVICES

- Vocational evaluation and counseling
- Job training
- Medical and psychiatric referral
- Assistive technology/equipment
- Orientation and mobility training
- Interpreter services
- Job placement
- Post-employment assistance
- Employment and disability services for businesses

*\*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration*

# VRS SUCCESS STORY

## *ROOSEVELT WRIGHT*

Even as a young child, Roosevelt Wright loved to tinker, take things apart to see how they worked, then put them back together. Today, as a 17-year-old freshman at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, that natural curiosity is leading him toward a degree in engineering and a career that, as he puts it, is out of this world.



“My dream job would be working for a defense contractor,” he said. “Missiles and rockets are cool stuff.”

Roosevelt had originally considered a medical career, but having spent most of his young life as a patient, he says he has had his fill of doctors.

When he was 2 years old, Roosevelt was diagnosed with dermatomyositis, a form of muscular dystrophy in which a person’s immune system attacks his own tissues. The disease is marked by progressive muscle weakness, severe pain and an accompanying rash that calcifies under the skin. It can also cause life-threatening lung and heart problems.

Roosevelt and his family were immediately introduced to the ADRS continuum of services. From the beginning, Children’s Rehabilitation Service has been helping the family understand the scope of the disability and what services and assistance Roosevelt would

require to receive an education and live successfully with his condition.

“I don’t remember a time in my life when CRS wasn’t there,” Roosevelt said.

Through the years, CRS has continually provided care coordination, clinic services, medical supplies and equipment, including his first wheelchair when he was in eighth grade. It was the chair that enabled him to go back to school.

“Roosevelt’s mother had been homeschooling him because pain, the strain on his heart and lack of mobility made it impossible for him to go to school,” said Sharron Richards, Roosevelt’s CRS social worker.

“But after CRS provided a wheelchair and built a ramp at his home, Roosevelt was able to leave the house, get on the school bus and get back in the classroom.”

Roosevelt graduated from Birmingham’s Parker High School with a 4.0 grade point average and set his sights on college. That’s when Vocational Rehabilitation Service stepped in to help his dreams come true.

“Roosevelt was a terrific young man and an excellent student, but he needed encouragement, financial assistance and some disability accommodations to attend college,” said Jim Donald, an ADRS supervisor who is also Roosevelt’s vocational rehabilitation counselor. Donald worked with Roosevelt and UAH to get Roosevelt enrolled.

“I think I can hold my own here with all these brainiacs at UAH,” Roosevelt said as he sat in the computer design room at the university’s Engineering building. “And I’d like to get my degree in four years instead of the usual five.”

Although he speaks with a quiet confidence earned by a life of overcoming many challenges, Roosevelt says he doesn’t have an inspirational message for other young people with disabilities, other than “stay in school.”

“I just live my life and hope that’s an encouragement to them.”



# TRANSITION SERVICE: SCHOOL TO WORK

## 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

ADRS transition from school-to-work services help ensure that Alabama's students with disabilities leave school as independent, productive and contributing members of their home communities. During FY 2001, ADRS continued to expand and improve collaborative interagency transition programs to even greater levels. Transition students continued to make up more than one-third of all individuals served and placed into employment by ADRS counselors.

The Transition Program also continued to strengthen the Jointly Funded Job Coach program with more than 75 local school systems across the state. This \$2.5 million program is designed to place students with disabilities who are in their exiting year of school into competitive jobs in their local communities before they leave high school. The program is cooperatively managed by local Vocational Rehabilitation Service and school system staff and during FY 2001 provided services to more than 2,000 students through 80 full-time job coaches. In addition, students, parents, rehabilitation counselors, local school special and regular education staff, and the job coaches work together to plan for students' successful and smooth transition to adult life and work.

In FY 2001, ADRS also continued efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs and service models to meet the needs of students with more significant disabilities and barriers to employment and community living. Some of these new and developing partnerships and initiatives included:

- Implementation of a new *Transition Weekend Program* for students who are blind or visually impaired. The Transition Weekend Program is a highly structured, though casual, weekend program designed to assist students and their families in planning for the student's future independence and career. The program was funded through a grant award from the Youth Council of the local Alabama Workforce Investment Board and was held during the summer 2001 on the campus of the Troy State University.
- Development of a new *Prison Transition Program* for 16- to 21-year-old prison inmates who are eligible for special education services under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act. This program is being developed in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Corrections, Education and Post Secondary Education and will link these young people to transition and employment services available through VRS. Inmates will receive information about ADRS services, be referred and connected to a VRS office in their home communities and have an appointment with a VRS counselor before the inmates are released from prison. The program will also provide feedback to the Department of Corrections as to results of each inmate's referral to VRS.
- Collaboration with the Autism Society of Alabama and the State Department of Education in the development and implementation of the *Family Focus Positive Behavior Support Model*, which provides intensive training and support for teams of individuals caring for and working with students with autism
- Continuation of a *model transition program for students who are deaf and/or blind and have other disabilities* in conjunction with the Helen Keller School of the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind
- Implementation of the *Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum* in collaboration with the Troy State University Institute for Leadership Development, the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities and the Alabama School-to-Career Office of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs



# BLIND AND DEAF SERVICES

## 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

The Blind/Deaf section provides assistance to Alabamians through its Blind Services, Deaf Services and OASIS (Older Alabamians System of Information and Services) programs. In fiscal year 2001, counselors guided 1,187 individuals with significant visual and hearing impairments into employment. This section also:

- Provided instruction and services in functional independent living skills to 1,520 citizens of Alabama who are blind or visually impaired to allow them to pursue employment or function independently
- Provided instruction and services to 1,024 senior citizens who have age-related blindness to assist them in maintaining or gaining independent living skills to allow them to remain in their own homes
- Taught 285 adults and older adults how to maneuver independently using a white cane
- Assisted in organizing 15 consumer support groups, thus assisting consumers in adjusting to their vision loss through interaction with other older adults who also are experiencing vision loss



- Partnered with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind to provide a summer Personal Planning workshop for Helen Keller School students who are deaf-blind with significant multiple disabilities

- Provided funding for the Alabama Eye Injury Registry

- Collaborated with Workforce Investment staff to ensure accessibility of persons who are blind and visually impaired to One-Stop Career Centers throughout the state

- Sponsored a Transition Weekend workshop for college-bound students who are visually impaired and their parents

- Developed and helped to present six Law Enforcement and Disability (LEAD) programs to local and state law enforcement agencies, including Department of Public Safety personnel

- Sponsored and expanded the Alabama Radio Reading Service for the visually impaired

- Provided instruction and services in functional independent living skills to 1,520 Alabamians who are blind or visually impaired to allow them to pursue employment or function independently

- Provided instruction and services to 1,024 senior citizens with age-related blindness, allowing them to gain or maintain their independence and preventing the high cost of premature institutionalization

- Partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide services to Alabama's veterans who are visually impaired

- Developed a strategic plan for services to children and adults who are deaf, hard of hearing or became deaf late in life

- Provided interpreter services to approximately 1,500 individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing through approximately 2,500 interpreter assignments

- Collaborated with the ADRS-operated Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility to establish a program to identify individuals who are deaf and hard-of-hearing and have a learning disability or cognitive disorder

- Appointed a state office interpreter to coordinate interpreter services for all ADRS divisions and events

# VRS SUCCESS STORY

## PAUL WHITTEN

Paul Whitten devoted his professional career to preparing for the worst. As a physicist and scientific adviser for the U.S. Army Chemical School in Anniston, Whitten worked to find ways to defend against nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Now, at 82, he is finding ways to fight an attack on his eyesight.

His battle with vision loss began five years ago when he discovered he couldn't see the television out of his left eye. Macular



degeneration, a common cause of blindness in the elderly, was to blame. In some cases, laser surgery can repair the deteriorating retina, but for Whitten, as with most patients, the surgery did not work. Having never experienced vision problems in his life, he learned to live with sight in just one eye.

Three years later, the condition claimed the sight in his right eye.

"I couldn't see the clock or read the newspaper anymore," Whitten said. "I tried driving to Birmingham to see my doctor, but had to let my wife take the wheel because I couldn't see." That was the last time he drove a car. But his doctor visit eventually led him to OASIS, an ADRS program that helps Alabamians older than 55 learn to live with vision loss and blindness.

"From the first time I met Mr. Whitten," said Rehabilitation Teacher Tyra Hawkins, "I have never seen him depressed. He's always been willing to try anything."

For Whitten, though, it was simply a matter of making the best of the situation.

"I think the Lord has helped me have a better attitude and He's allowed me to have resources like OASIS and Tyra so I can have the best technology," said Whitten, a Sunday school teacher for more than two decades.

Since Whitten couldn't read even with the aid of a magnifying glass, he purchased a CCTV, a television-like device which projects greatly enlarged text on a video screen. With it, he can read things like prescription bottles, some mail and financial documents. He also has a software program which magnifies print on his computer screen.

Sammie, Whitten's wife of 56 years, helps with daily doses of encouragement and by reading mail, e-mail, books and other material. Through books on tape, he has rediscovered his love of reading, gobbling up nearly 500 books, including the Bible, in the past three years.

Whitten was such an enthusiastic student, Tyra Hawkins asked him to help establish an OASIS support group in the Anniston area for other people having similar vision problems.

"People share their problems and learn about the technology that's available to help," said Whitten.

And there's an added benefit. "When you get there and see that there are other people with problems and you see how they're coping, it gives you energy to cope yourself."

His message to others experiencing macular degeneration is simple: It's not the end of the world.

"I tell them there are still a lot of things you can do," said Whitten. "I encourage them to contact OASIS and get into the program. It's made a world of difference in my life."



# VRS SUCCESS STORY

## MATT McNEIL

Matt McNeil's life as a teen-ager began a little differently than most. When he was 13, he traded his walker for his first wheelchair.

Matt has Friedreich's ataxia, a slowly progressive disease of the nervous system which causes an inability to coordinate voluntary movements. Over time, leg muscles continue to weaken and arms and hands become increasingly uncoordinated. The



symptoms showed up in Matt when he was about 4 years old, when his parents noticed his clumsiness and tendency to stumble. His condition was not officially diagnosed until he was 10. And the doctors were not optimistic.

"They told us he wouldn't go to college on a football scholarship," said Matt's mother, Donna McNeil, "but the worst news was that there was no treatment, no way to stop the disease."

CRS has been a part of Matt's life for most of his years. The slow deterioration has required several surgeries, including operations when he was 16 to implant steel rods to support his spine. The rods had to be replaced two years later. Matt has received physical therapy as often as three times a week and has attended neurology clinics regularly. CRS also purchased his newest wheelchair – a motorized chair that he says is fine for school and his part-

time job, but too slow for Disney World.

Through it all, Matt remains confident and upbeat, but admits there are some things that bother him.

"The most frustrating thing is having to wait on other people to do things for me," Matt said. "It takes patience, but I guess God helps me with that."

Matt also gets a little help from his friends. Take graduation, for example.

One of the most popular students at Rehoboth High School, Matt was voted Mr. RHS in his senior year. But his proudest moment came when he steered his wheelchair on stage to receive his diploma. Two of his friends met him behind a curtain, helped him out of his chair and "walked" him across the stage where he accepted his diploma to a thunderous standing ovation from the audience.

"I am so thankful for that moment," said Matt.

Now Matt has set his sights on college and possibly a career in sports journalism or even coaching. Vocational Rehabilitation Service already has arranged his first internship with the local newspaper, has helped him enroll at Wallace State Community College and has provided him with an accessible computer and an attendant. VRS is also helping the school provide other appropriate accommodations for him.

He doesn't allow his condition to interfere with his plans for the future.

"I take one day at a time," said Matt, "and I have a lot of hope and faith."



# BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

## 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

The Business Enterprise Program, a program of the Vocational Rehabilitation Service, provides qualified blind individuals with job training and employment opportunities through the management and operation of snack bars, vending facilities, gift shops and cafeterias.



The program currently provides employment for 131 blind vendors and licensees in snack bars, cafeterias, vending machine routes, washeterias, vending machine facilities, a gift shop and two military dining hall operations.

BEP operates 134 vending machine facilities, more than any other program in the nation.

Alabama's blind vendors also employ 277 other Alabamians – including visually impaired individuals – in their businesses. In FY 2001, BEP's gross sales hit \$17,324,631. This represents an increase in gross sales of \$438,906 over FY 2000.

Also in FY 2001, this program:

- Increased average annual earnings for Alabama's BEP vendors for the sixth consecutive year. Since FY 1996, individual annual earnings have risen from \$22,175 to \$29,330, a 32.26 percent increase.

- Managed the largest number of total facilities in the nation per capita. Regionally, Alabama's BEP has more vendors at interstate rest areas and welcome centers.

Currently, BEP operates 21 vending businesses in Department of Corrections facilities. Also, the contracts for Redstone Arsenal Dining Hall located in Huntsville and the Alabama National Guard Dining Hall located in Anniston were extended for an option year.

- Partnered with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind to open a new BEP training facility and classroom.

This facility provides a state-of-the-art environment to train future vendors interested in participating in Alabama's BEP.

- Converted all BEP fund accounts to a "business money market" account, allowing the department to maximize the interest earned on funds paid by vendors for management services.

### NEW VENDING LOCATIONS

Alabama School for the Deaf, Talladega

Hoover Library, Hoover

Johnston Rast and Hayes LLP, Birmingham

Lakeshore Foundation Multi-Use Fitness Center, Birmingham

Houston County Courthouse, Dothan

Department of Industrial Relations Career Center, Alabaster

# EMPLOYER DEVELOPMENT

## 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

Partnerships with employers have been a vital part of Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) for more than 20 years. In addition to addressing disability-in-the-workplace needs of employers, these partnerships meet the recruiting needs of Alabama businesses as well as increasing employment opportunities for VRS consumers

Alabama's VRS is a national innovator using these approaches:

- Employers recognized as VRS's other customers, with established accounts serviced by employer development coordinators.
- Continuous improvement of services to employers to include:
  - Recruiting assistance
  - Technical assistance and resource linkage on disability concerns and issues
  - Integrated disability management services through the new RAVE (Retaining A Valued Employee) program
  - Electronic recruiting and job-posting system entitled the Employment Management System
  - Financial incentives assistance for accommodation and accessibility
  - Training and one-on-one consulting in employee accommodation dialogue, resource identification and solutions; disability awareness and etiquette; interviewing tips; identification of essential job functions
- Regional leveraging to reach employers who "cross state lines," where established partnerships with VRS have been accomplished in other Southeastern vocational rehabilitation agencies. In 2001, Alabama's VRS led this effort, which generated a regional employer account database and the development of a regional website to share training materials and information and eventually link to employers

Application of the latest marketing techniques and use of customized employer survey results

- In-state coordination of all VRS employment programs to include: supported employment, occupational diploma and school-to-work transition, community rehabilitation program employment activities and the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities.

Special 2001 Initiatives by the Employer Development Program included:

**RAVE-UAB:** In partnership with the University of Alabama at Birmingham, VRS co-funded a full-time return-to-work counselor to assist UAB employees whose jobs are affected by disability.

**Business Leadership Network:** In FY 2001, VRS provided behind-the-scenes support to employers involved in this nationally supported concept, which focuses on linking businesses to address disability issues.

**ADRS** also used its Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities and the day-to-day leadership in this effort. More than 100 businesses participated in "Managing the Cost of Disability in the Workplace," the first of a series of educational sessions.

**Manpower Inc.-Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership:** This unique affiliation has generated short-term skills training for VRS consumers and employer partnerships for VRS while also providing qualified candidates to Manpower Inc. for their most productive accounts with employers. Statewide and regional replication is planned.

## EMPLOYER DEVELOPMENT: THE OUTCOMES

Total number of active employer accounts: 1,054

Total number of services provided to those accounts: 5,691

Job vacancies "posted" with VRS: 1,919 with 528 companies

Referrals of job candidates to employers: 1,294 to 500 companies

Total number of hires by these accounts: 809 at 554 companies



# VRS SUCCESS STORIES

## *GOLD KIST*

The Gold Kist plant in Russellville has a long-standing tradition of hiring people with disabilities.

“Gold Kist has never said, ‘No, this person can’t do that,’ ” said Dawn Huntzinger, VRS employer development coordinator in Muscle Shoals. “If I need help in Russellville, I turn to them. They even point us to jobs at other companies.”

Maurice Lyle, a 21-year-old with learning disabilities, has benefited personally from Gold Kist’s relationship with ADRS. He’s been working there since March 2000 and loves it.

“They’ve been great to me, very supportive,” said Lyle. “And they’re nice folks to work with.”

The company has been involved in various VRS programs, including the Start on Success internship program, and has made financial donations to the Shoals Area Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities.

Teresa Lawton, a human resources assistant at Gold Kist, said her employer has a corporatewide commitment to hiring people with disabilities.

“We know that just because a person has a challenge doesn’t mean he can’t do the job,” she said.



## *McDONALD’S*

“We Love to See You Smile” is synonymous with fast-food burger chain McDonald’s, but at the McDonald’s in Muscle Shoals, the slogan is especially true.

All who are served by employee Lori Smith leave with a smile. The 21-year-old woman, who has Down syndrome, has been working at the restaurant for almost two years and has an enthusiasm that is contagious, particularly for customers.



“Not a single person drives away without a smile on his face when Lori is working the drive-through,” said Debbie Martin, who operates the eatery with husband Mike.

Lori also inspires her coworkers, who try to emulate her work ethic and attitude, Martin said.

And the young woman’s hard work has paid off.

She was named Employee of the Year by the Shoals Area Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities, while her bosses were chosen Employer of the Year.

The Muscle Shoals McDonald’s has been employing ADRS consumers since Dawn Huntzinger, employer development coordinator in the area office, approached its owners a couple of years ago.

“Since ADRS first established a relationship with McDonald’s, Debbie’s always been open to looking at our folks,” Huntzinger said. “In fact, she tries to find a place for them.”

To Martin, though, hiring people with disabilities is nothing extraordinary.

“Lori’s definitely been a blessing to us,” she said. “But it’s wonderful to get an award for doing something so normal.”

## 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (Governor's Committee), a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), continues to work in conjunction with the Vocational Rehabilitation Service staff to enhance the public's awareness of the abilities of people with disabilities. Programs and special events demonstrate this strong partnership in providing information about advantages of hiring people with disabilities.

### **Disability Employment Awareness Month**

As part of National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month, the Governor's Committee and the local affiliated committees sponsored more than 25 celebrations. In October, 272 awards were presented to individuals and businesses for their exemplary efforts in promoting employment for people with disabilities. Of this number, 81 individuals with disabilities were recognized for outstanding performance on the job, and 110 businesses were honored for consistently including people with disabilities as a part of their diverse workforce.

### **Business Leadership Network**

The Governor's Committee and ADRS received a three-year grant from the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities to establish the Business Leadership Network (BLN). This new program is an employer-led endeavor that aims to promote best disability employment practices and enhance employment opportunities for skilled candidates who have disabilities. Through the BLN program, employers will partner with ADRS to coordinate efforts and resources, identify the needs of the business community, provide educational forums relating to disability employment issues, and work to dismantle attitudinal barriers about individuals with disabilities.



### **2001 Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum**

The Governor's Committee joined ADRS and the Institute for Leadership Development at Troy State University in conducting the 3rd Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum for Students With Disabilities. Thirty student delegates were selected to participate in a five-day forum on the Troy State University campus in June. Delegates had an opportunity to meet many successful Alabamians with disabilities who are recognized as leaders and role models. These adults participated as mentors for the program at a panel discussion and mentors' luncheon. Student delegates developed their own personal leadership and career plans. Through team-building exercises, group discussions, an Internet career search and a technology exhibit, delegates learned about the world of disability and the possibilities for success through employment.

### **Start on Success**

Alabama's Start on Success program – a partnership among the ADRS Vocational Rehabilitation Service program, the Governor's Committee, Lakeshore Foundation and a variety of Alabama businesses – provides basic job-readiness training to high school students selected for the program during the school year. During fiscal year 2000, five local governor's committees coordinated Start on Success programs. These programs provided 33 students with disabilities their first paying, on-the-job work experiences with 33 different employers.

# VRS SUCCESS STORY

## *SUSAN CRAIG*

It began with a numbness. Three days later, 20-year-old Susan Craig, a single mother of a 2-year-old boy, was paralyzed. Initially diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, it wasn't until 1995 — 10 years later — that Craig learned she actually has acute transverse myelitis, a syndrome with acute inflammation of the spinal cord that can cause paraplegia.

In 1997, during her second year at Lurleen B. Wallace Junior College in Andalusia, Craig contacted Kathy Wyatt, a rehabilitation counselor in the local VRS office, for assistance.

Craig was already familiar with ADRS; she had received medical supplies and personal care services through the Homebound program in the 1980s. But her needs this time were different. She longed for more independence. VRS provided vocational assessment, counseling, job readiness training, and job retention services. In addition, the program assisted Craig with vehicle modifications so that she could drive again.

Suddenly, Craig was independent once more.

Part of that rediscovered independence included involvement with Wheeling Sportsmen, a sporting group for people with disabilities. The Andalusia woman and her son, now grown, often go

hunting and fishing at the organization's camp in Union Springs.

"I was free to go where I wanted," she said. "You can't replace independence."

When Craig graduated in 1999, VRS again assisted, helping her find employment as switchboard operator at Mizell Memorial Hospital and providing a job coach to assist her in mastering her new job.

Since joining the Mizell staff in September 2000, she's been promoted to patient financial representative and couldn't be happier.

"I'm right where I want to be," she said.

And she credits VRS and Kathy Wyatt with making her success possible.

"They look after people; they care. I don't know where I'd be without them," Craig said. "They gave me my independence."



# COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

## 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

The community rehabilitation program network of mostly private, nonprofit organizations has been assisting ADRS rehabilitation counselors for more than 40 years in providing important services to consumers. In FY 2001, more than 2,900 consumers who were assisted in finding employment through VRS received one or more services from this network.

Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility, the only community rehabilitation program operated by ADRS, assists people with severe or significant disabilities in pursuing their dreams — whether they lead them to college and the workplace or straight into employment. Programs are tailored to specifically meet the goals of the individual. Consumers can participate in a comprehensive vocational assessment, which assists in identifying vocational skills, abilities and career goals. Additional individualized and group training is offered for college-bound consumers (college preparation). Job placement is coordinated by an employment specialist who focuses on matching the consumer to a job using information gathered about the consumer.



In fiscal year 2001, Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility:

- Served 921 VR consumers and provided 1,059 programs
- Increased the number of consumers with mental illness diagnoses who were served
- Continued development of a specialized assessment program for individuals with specific learning disabilities who are deaf
- Expanded college preparation services by offering a Christmas college prep mini-session as well as a spring break mini-session; the facility also upgraded the college prep program by providing year-round individualized programs.
- Increased the number of individuals referred for job placement

Success stories at other community rehabilitation programs included:

- A 27-year-old man with mental retardation who is now successfully employed for the first time in his life (served by Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center)
- A young woman with a serious traumatic brain injury who is once again employed and regaining her independence (served by Opportunity Center-Easter Seals)
- A young man who – because of profound deafness and cerebral palsy – faced serious communication barriers but is now successfully employed (served by Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf, Easter Seals)

## THE ADRS NETWORK OF COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

### ANNISTON

Opportunity Center-Easter Seals

### BIRMINGHAM

Easter Seals of the Birmingham Area  
Goodwill Industries of Alabama  
Lakeshore Rehabilitation Center  
Workshops, Inc.

### DECATUR

Tennessee Valley Rehabilitation  
Center

### DOTHAN

Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center

### GADSDEN

E.L. Darden Rehabilitation  
Foundation, Inc.

### HUNTSVILLE

Huntsville Rehabilitation Center, a division  
of the Huntsville Rehabilitation Foundation

### MOBILE

Goodwill Industries for the Gulf Coast  
Mobile Association for the Blind

### MONTGOMERY

Easter Seals of Central Alabama  
Elks Memorial Center  
Goodwill Industries of Central Alabama  
Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf,  
Easter Seals

### MARC

### MUSCLE SHOALS

Easter Seals Rehabilitation Center, Northwest

Alabama

### OPELIKA

Achievement Center-Easter Seals

### PRATTVILLE

Smith Center

### SELMA

West Central Alabama Easter Seals  
Rehabilitation Center

### TALLADEGA

E.H. Gentry Technical Facility

### THOMASVILLE

Thomasville Mental Health Rehabilitation  
Center

### TUSCALOOSA

Easter Seals West Alabama

# STATEWIDE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS AND RESPONSE

## 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

STAR (Statewide Technology Access and Response System for Alabamians with Disabilities) is a statewide program of ADRS dedicated to providing Alabamians with disabilities increased access to assistive technology devices and services.

The program guides people with disabilities through the process of locating and obtaining technology to help them at work, school and in everyday life. In fiscal year 2001, STAR:

- Provided disability awareness training for more than 3,300 students, teachers and school administrators through Enhancing Technology Access and Attitudes (ETA) program for schools
- Provided, through the grassroots organization Technet, advocacy assistance to approximately 2,400 consumers across the state; the assistance included training seminars, technology demonstrations and resource referrals
- Refurbished and loaned 898 devices to consumers statewide through the equipment-recycling program
- Through the Ability Loan Program, a collaborative effort with SouthTrust Bank, made a total of approximately \$85,000 in low-interest loans to Alabamians to purchase assistive technology

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

### 2001 HIGHLIGHTS

In an effort to assist individuals with the most-severe disabilities in becoming employed, Supported Employment provides intensive job-site training and support services to ensure quality job performance and stability. These services include using an ADRS-funded job coach, who goes to the job site and teaches the required job tasks. Supported employment specialists also arrange continued support services for the worker throughout his or her working life to ensure long-term job stability.

FY 2001 marked the second year of the implementation of Milestones, an outcome-based payment system for supported employment. In FY 2001, this program:

- Provided supported employment services to 1,122 individuals through 26 agencies across the state
- Assisted 279 individuals in becoming employed, a 15 percent increase over FY 2000; these individuals worked an average of 23 hours per week, earning an average of \$5.71 an hour

The use of Medicaid waiver in funding supported employment was also addressed and piloted in FY 2001. This program will now enable agencies to use both the ADRS Milestones payment system and the Medicaid waiver to fund the costs of providing supported employment to individuals with the most-significant disabilities in Alabama. In addition, the waiver will enable agencies to provide intensive long-term supports to those individuals who might otherwise be unable to work because of their disabilities.

## VRS SPECIALTY PROGRAMS

**Transition Service:** Helps high school students with disabilities to prepare for employment and community living through employment training and support services.

**Supported Employment:** Assists Alabamians with the most significant disabilities, offering intensive on-site job training and support services including job coaches.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Care Coordination:** Assists persons with TBI and their families in preparing for the return to the community and assists with appropriate vocational rehabilitation services in preparation to enter or return to the workplace.

**Blind and Deaf Services:** Rehabilitation teaching provides instruction in the use of adaptive techniques and equipment for

people who are visually impaired; orientation and mobility specialists provide instruction in the use of compensatory skills and adaptive devices to enable people with visual impairments to travel independently; interpreters are available to assist those with hearing impairments in their job searches.

**Business Enterprise Program (BEP):** Provides qualified blind individuals with job training and employment opportunities through the management and operation of snack bars, vending facilities, gift shops and cafeterias.

**OASIS (Older Alabamians System of Information and Services):** Assists Alabamians 55 and older with vision problems in living more independently in their homes and communities.

## VRS SUCCESS STORY

# *DR. MARY ANN PRITCHETT*

It was the violin that brought Dr. Mary Ann Pritchett to Alabama and led her to medical school. She fell in love with the instrument as a child in Cleveland, Ohio, won a scholarship to a music conservatory in Boston and after graduation, began her career as a classical musician. In 1977, she moved to Birmingham to join the Alabama Symphony, where she performed with the orchestra for 16 years. She remembers how the music stopped.



“The pain began in my wrists and became so bad that I could not exert any pressure on the strings of my violin,” Pritchett said. “I could move my fingers forward, but not back.”

Her doctor discovered a severe inflammation of the muscles, but surgeons told her there was nothing that could be done to correct the problem or stop the pain. She was committed to music and determined to continue her career. She began physical therapy and her condition seemed to improve.

She returned to the symphony on a part-time basis, adjusting to her physical limitations, playing not only with the pain, but also the uncertainty of not knowing how long she could endure professionally.

“I had played the violin everyday for 30 years and I was not prepared for **not** playing,” Mary Ann said.

The fatal blow came when the Alabama Symphony shut down.

“It was devastating. I knew that because of my worsening condition I could not audition for other positions elsewhere,” said Mary Ann. Because of the severity of her condition, her physical therapist referred her to the Vocational Rehabilitation Service.

VRS Rehabilitation Counselor Dick Casler began helping Mary Ann look for a career that would fit her. Before she chose music, Mary Ann had been interested in medicine. Her academic record and VRS assessment showed she had the aptitude for the profession, but because of her decision to study the violin instead, she lacked a number of courses that she needed to apply to medical school.

Plus, she was now 38 years old.

With Casler’s encouragement and financial assistance from VRS, Mary Ann enrolled at a nearby community college to pick up the classes she needed to meet the science requirements of medical school.

She excelled and when she applied to the UAB School of Medicine, she was accepted, but was placed 50<sup>th</sup> on the alternate admissions list.

“I was told not to hold out any hope,” she said.

In the next phone call she was told to sit down for the news she didn’t believe she would ever hear.

“They told me I was the last person on the list,” she said, “and I had been accepted!” She became the oldest student ever admitted to UAB’s medical school, with scholarships and loans covering her costs.

Because of her own medical condition, Mary Ann was limited in her choice of specialties. Surgery, of course, was not possible. She chose family practice and in May 2001, Mary Ann Pritchett became Dr. Mary Ann Pritchett. Today, she’s a resident physician at Carraway Hospital in Birmingham.

“I feel I was railroaded by God into this,” said Dr. Mary Ann Pritchett. “But I also know that the Department of Rehabilitation Services made it possible and I am so grateful.”



# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### STATE OFFICE

2129 E. South Blvd., Montgomery  
36116-2455  
334-281-8780, 1-800-441-7607  
334-281-1973 (fax)  
www.rehab.state.al.us

### ANDALUSIA

580 West Bypass, 36420  
334-222-4114, 1-800-671-6833  
334-427-1216 (fax)  
Counties: Butler, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Crenshaw, Pike

### ANNISTON

1105 Woodstock Ave., 36207  
256-238-9300, 1-800-671-6834  
256-231-4852 (fax)  
Counties: Calhoun, Cleburne, Randolph

### BESSEMER

Bessemer State Technical College  
P.O. Box 308, Highway 11 S, 35021-0308  
205-426-1294  
County: Jefferson

### BIRMINGHAM

Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility  
P.O. Box 59127, 3830 Ridgeway Drive  
35259-9127  
205-870-5999, 1-800-441-7609  
205-879-2685 (fax)  
Statewide

### HOMEWOOD (Birmingham)

P.O. Box 19888, 236 Goodwin Crest Drive  
35219-0888  
205-290-4400, 1-800-671-6837  
205-290-0486 (fax)  
Counties: Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby

### COLUMBIANA

Community Services Building  
P.O. Box 856, 35051-0856  
205-669-3829, 205-669-0605 (fax)  
County: Shelby

### DECATUR

621 Cherry St., NE  
P.O. Box 1686, 35601  
256-353-2754, 1-800-671-6838  
256-351-2476 (fax)  
Counties: Cullman, Lawrence, Limestone, Morgan

### DOTHAN

795 Ross Clark Circle, NE, 36303  
334-792-0022, 1-800-275-0132  
334-792-1783 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston

### GADSDEN

1100 George Wallace Drive, 35903-6501  
256-547-6974, 1-800-671-6839  
256-543-1784 (fax)  
Counties: Cherokee, DeKalb, Etowah, Marshall, St. Clair

### HUNTSVILLE

2939 Johnson Road, SW, 35805-5844  
256-650-8219, 1-800-671-6840  
256-650-8250 (fax)  
Counties: Jackson, Madison

### JACKSON

P.O. Box 1005, 1401 Forest Ave., 36545  
251-246-5708, 1-800-671-6836  
251-246-5224 (fax)  
Counties: Choctaw, Clarke, Monroe, Washington

### JASPER

301 N. Walston Bridge Road  
Suite 116, 35504  
205-221-7840, 1-800-671-6841  
205-221-1062 (fax)  
Counties: Marion, Walker, Winston

### MOBILE

2419 Gordon Smith Drive, 36617-2395  
251-479-8611, 1-800-671-6842  
251-471-6018 (fax)  
Counties: Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, Washington

### MONTGOMERY

2127 E. South Blvd., 36116-2456  
334-288-0220, 1-800-441-7578  
334-281-1388 (fax)  
Counties: Autauga, Bullock, Elmore, Macon, Montgomery

### MUSCLE SHOALS

1450 E. Avalon Ave., 35661  
256-381-1110, 1-800-275-0166  
256-389-3149 (fax)  
Counties: Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale

### OPELIKA

520 W. Thomason Circle, 36801  
334-749-1259, 1-800-671-6835  
334-749-8753 (fax)  
Counties: Chambers, Lee, Macon, Russell, Tallapoosa

### SCOTTSBORO

P. O. Box 296, 203 S. Market St.  
35768-0296  
256-574-5813, 1-800-418-8823  
256-574-6033 (fax)  
County: Jackson

### SELMA

2906 Citizens Parkway, 36701  
334-872-8422, 1-888-761-5995  
334-877-3796 (fax)  
Counties: Dallas, Lowndes, Wilcox

### TALLADEGA

#4 Medical Office Park, 35160  
256-362-1300, 1-800-441-7592  
256-362-6387 (fax)  
Counties: Clay, Coosa, Randolph, St. Clair, Talladega

### THOMASVILLE

Thomasville Rehabilitation Center  
P.O. Box 1006, Adams Building,  
Bashi Road, 36784-1006  
334-636-5421, 1-800-335-3237  
334-636-4618 (fax)  
Counties: Choctaw, Clarke, Monroe, Washington

### TROY

518 S. Brundidge St., 36081  
334-566-2491, 1-800-441-7608  
334-566-9415 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Pike

### TUSCALOOSA

1305 37th St., E, P.O. Drawer 1610, 35405  
205-554-1300, 1-800-331-5562  
205-554-1369 (fax)  
Counties: Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Marengo, Marion, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, Tuscaloosa, Walker, Winston



**SAIL** (STATE OF ALABAMA  
INDEPENDENT LIVING) SERVICE

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# The SAIL (State of Alabama Independent Living) Service provides specialized in-home education and counseling, attendant care, training and medical services to Alabamians with severe disabilities.

The SAIL program has seven community-based offices located throughout the state to serve residents in all 67 counties.

SAIL ensures the consumer can live as independently as possible at home and in the community through three specialized programs.

## Homebound Services

This program provides a wide range of education and home-based services to assist people with severe disabilities in leading more independent lives. To be eligible for this program, a person must:

- be an Alabama resident
- be at least 16 years old
- have a medical diagnosis of traumatic brain injury or quadriplegia
- be dependent on others for assistance with activities of daily living
- demonstrate financial need

## Independent Living Support Services

The goal of this program is to enhance and promote independence in the home, community and workplace. To be eligible a person must:

- have a severe disability that limits his or her ability to live independently
- provide evidence that by receiving this service, his or her potential to achieve independence will improve

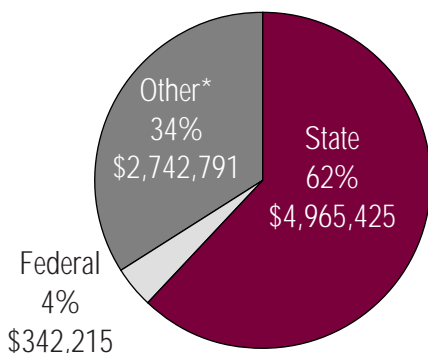
## Waiver Services

This special Medicaid Waiver allows SAIL to maximize its resources and access additional programs and services for the individuals served. To be eligible for services through the waiver, a person must:

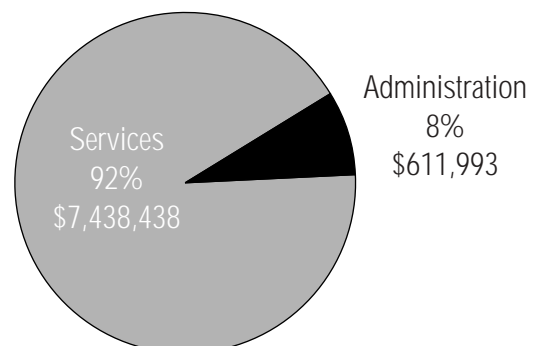
- be at least 18 years old
- be medically and financially eligible for a nursing home
- have experienced the onset of the disability prior to age 60
- have a disability as a result of reasons other than aging

## SAIL: BY THE NUMBERS

Source of Revenue: \$8,050,431



Use of Revenue: \$8,050,431



\*Medicaid reimbursements

# STATE OF ALABAMA INDEPENDENT LIVING

## 2001 SUCCESSES

### Provided Services to Record Number of Alabamians with Severe Disabilities

- Assisted more than 1,500 Alabamians with the severest disabilities in remaining in their homes and communities rather than in nursing homes or other institutions
  - 704 consumers with severe disabilities in the Homebound Program
  - 523 consumers with severe disabilities in the Independent Living Service
  - 474 consumers with severe disabilities in the Medicaid Waiver Program

### Provided Statewide Services with Small Staff

- Seven teams are located statewide, serving 67 counties

*SAIL teams of registered nurses, rehabilitation counselors and independent living specialists provide individualized services and training to SAIL consumers and their families about the unique problems and needs presented by each differing disability. SAIL teams also teach activities of daily living, health, safety and nutrition as well as the use of assistive technology. In addition, SAIL teams educate SAIL consumers and their families about self-advocacy, empowering them to access services.*

- The SAIL Independent Living Service employed 24 professional staff members to meet these individual needs.

### Collaborated to Improve Services, Saving Tax Dollars

• SAIL and the Alabama Medicaid Agency submitted to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) a proposal under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act (TWWIIA) to use Infrastructure Grant Funds to pay for a pilot program for Personal Assistance Service (PAS), as an additional waiver service. This will allow SAIL to provide services for working individuals who need waiver medical guidelines to receive services outside the home in an employment setting. SAIL was awarded this grant and awaits funding for its implementation.

- The State Plan for Independent Living was approved by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration, granting funding for the next three years
  - SAIL field staff continued in FY 2001 to develop resources to supplement limited funding
  - SAIL state office staff participated in the Performance-Based Budgeting Initiative of the governor's office

### SAIL SERVICES

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • Attendant care                   | • Disability-related medical supplies     |
| • Patient and family education     | • Peer counseling                         |
| • Counseling and guidance          | • Training in activities for daily living |
| • Nursing management               | • Information and referral                |
| • Home modifications               |   |
| • Disability-related prescriptions |   |



# SAIL SUCCESS STORY

## REGGIE LEWIS

Not many people would consider a high-level spinal cord injury a “pothole.” But that’s just how 39-year-old Reginald Lewis views the injury he received during a Marengo County High School football game when he was 16.

For him, the accident that left him with quadriplegia was a mere bump in the road.

He attributes his positive attitude to his family and his faith – both of which sustained him during the nine-month hospital stay and long recovery that followed.



He was so upbeat, in fact, that he comforted his friends and coaches, who felt responsible for the accident because they had encouraged him to play football in the first place.

“I had to tell them it wasn’t their fault,” he said, “things happen, that it was going to be OK. I reminded them that I was still Reggie; I’m just in a chair.”

Also assisting with his adjustment was the SAIL Service, which was there almost from the beginning, providing attendant care, medical supplies, and the first of many wheelchairs.

Amazingly, the young man was able to complete high school with his peers, graduating third in his class of 200. After graduation, he went to the University of Alabama in Birmingham, in pursuit of a mechanical engineering degree.

Things went well until his third year, when he discovered he didn’t have the dexterity needed to handle mechanical tools.

He dropped out, returned home and earned an associate’s degree in accounting.

While there, he also learned to drive, with VRS helping with the modifications for a van.

He found a job with a CPA in Tuscaloosa and worked there for a few years before deciding to return to school.

Today, he’s pursuing a bachelor’s degree in computer networking and is almost completely independent, requiring the assistance of a personal care attendant in the mornings.

He also offers support to others in similar circumstances, telling them, “Never give up; keep pushing.”

Veranda Melton, a nurse with the SAIL service, said Lewis has helped countless others.

“He is an inspiration to so many people,” she said. “He shows that when you get over the mental limitations, the physical won’t be so difficult.”

Not bad for a man who was told by one doctor that he would never be independent.

“If I could talk to that doctor,” Lewis said, “I’d tell him that when he evaluates a patient, he needs to remember he doesn’t have the final say; God does.”



# SAIL SUCCESS STORY

## MIKE LEDFORD

For Mike Ledford, football is more than a series of downs, offense and defense. It also teaches important life lessons.

“Football taught me no matter how bad you’re down, if you don’t give up, you can come back to win,” said the 21-year-old.

And it was the determination learned as a linebacker at Sand Rock High School that proved invaluable after a devastating auto accident in August 1999 killed his fiancée and left him with a spinal cord injury.

“I died three times. I had a steel plate in my neck, steel rod in my leg, pins in my knees and I was on a respirator,” he said.

Doctors told him he’d never breathe on his own, that he wouldn’t be able to feed, bathe, or shave himself.

Then he remembered the words of his high school football coach, Russell Jacoway.

“Coach taught me a very important lesson – you don’t ever give up without a fight,” Ledford said.

And so he fought.

Four months later, when he returned home from the hospital, he was able to do all of the things the doctors said he’d never do. And much more.

He hunted, fished, rode a jet ski, “pretty much anything” he wanted to do. SAIL helped with home modifications, a wheel-chair lift for his truck, medical supplies. CRS supplied a wheelchair.

But he wasn’t completely satisfied.

That’s when his former coach approached him about volunteering as an assistant coach for his alma mater’s football team.

He started working with the offensive and defensive lines the following spring and has just completed his second season with the team.

He enjoys his new work so much, in fact, that with the help of VRS Counselor Kenny Maness he’s working to enroll at Gadsden State Community College. He hopes to return to his former high school as a physical education teacher.

Despite all that’s happened, how his life has changed, the young man still sees a bright side.

“The best thing to happen out of all of this? I get to be around football all the time.”



## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### STATE OFFICE

2129 E. South Blvd., Montgomery  
36116-2455  
334-281-8780, 1-800-441-7607  
334-613-3542 (fax)  
[www.rehab.state.al.us](http://www.rehab.state.al.us)

### ANNISTON

1105 Woodstock Ave., 36207  
256-238-9300, 1-800-671-6834  
256-231-4852 (fax)  
Counties: Calhoun, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne,  
Coosa, DeKalb, Etowah, Marshall, Randolph,  
St. Clair, Talladega

### DECATUR

621 Cherry St., NE, 35601  
256-353-2754, 1-800-671-6838  
256-351-2476 (fax)  
Counties: Colbert, Cullman, Franklin, Jackson,  
Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison,  
Morgan

### DOTHAN

795 Ross Clark Circle, NE, 36303  
334-792-0022, 1-800-275-0132  
334-792-1783 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Butler, Coffee, Conecuh,  
Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry,  
Houston, Pike

### HOMEWOOD (Birmingham)

P.O. Box 19888  
236 Goodwin Crest Drive, 35219-0888  
205-290-4400, 1-800-671-6837  
205-290-0486 (fax)  
Counties: Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby

### MOBILE

2419 Gordon Smith Drive, 36617  
251-478-2152, 1-888-388-3245  
251-471-6018 (fax)  
Counties: Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke,  
Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, Washington

### MONTGOMERY

2127 E. South Blvd., 36116  
334-288-0220, 1-800-441-7578  
334-613-3455 (fax)  
Counties: Autauga, Bullock, Chambers,  
Dallas, Elmore, Lee, Lowndes, Macon,  
Montgomery, Russell, Tallapoosa, Wilcox

### TUSCALOOSA

1305 37th St., East, 35405  
205-554-1300  
1-800-441-7597, 1-800-331-5562  
205-554-1369 (fax)  
Counties: Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar,  
Marengo, Marion, Perry, Pickens, Sumter,  
Tuscaloosa, Walker, Winston

# PEOPLE SERVED BY ADRS

Counties	Vocational Rehabilitation Service		Children's Rehabilitation Service	SAIL Service	Early Intervention System	Fiscal 2001
	Served	Rehabilitated	Served	Served	Served	Total Served
AUTAUGA	401	81	219	12	51	683
BALDWIN	823	148	300	25	95	1,243
BARBOUR	217	32	103	24	30	374
BIBB	230	46	47	9	34	320
BLOUNT	298	74	92	15	38	443
BULLOCK	82	11	67	0	13	162
BUTLER	203	29	110	9	18	340
CALHOUN	1,382	204	416	54	75	1,927
CHAMBERS	431	84	135	6	26	598
CHEROKEE	315	37	122	14	10	461
CHILTON	235	48	160	15	33	443
CHOCTAW	154	33	53	6	21	234
CLARKE	384	56	157	11	19	571
CLAY	188	33	53	9	7	257
CLEBURNE	159	43	86	7	12	264
COFFEE	343	52	150	22	38	553
COLBERT	579	101	139	11	26	755
CONECUH	163	30	52	9	9	233
COOSA	133	29	36	1	3	173
COVINGTON	470	85	155	43	25	693
CRENSHAW	155	30	51	8	10	224
CULLMAN	605	136	196	24	66	891
DALE	328	61	147	13	33	521
DALLAS	325	74	295	10	83	713
DeKALB	576	138	180	30	39	825
ELMORE	588	106	271	14	47	920
ESCAMBIA	354	64	82	16	37	489
ETOWAH	1,308	245	502	42	52	1,904
FAYETTE	188	31	72	7	27	294
FRANKLIN	296	51	101	11	15	423
GENEVA	121	25	77	15	19	232
GREENE	73	12	57	9	33	172
HALE	202	36	51	3	63	319
HENRY	95	13	45	7	12	159

# PEOPLE SERVED BY ADRS

Counties	Vocational Rehabilitation Service		Children's Rehabilitation Service	SAIL Service	Early Intervention System	Fiscal 2001
	Served	Rehabilitated	Served	Served	Served	Total Served
HOUSTON	839	164	330	37	70	1,276
JACKSON	710	143	116	16	21	863
JEFFERSON	7,338	1,278	1,211	213	520	9,282
LAMAR	188	31	57	9	20	274
LAUDERDALE	691	121	195	17	52	955
LAWRENCE	206	58	119	13	21	359
LEE	754	160	311	21	56	1,142
LIMESTONE	366	92	171	17	43	597
LOWNDES	137	25	123	3	22	285
MACON	198	46	98	2	26	324
MADISON	2,766	451	820	43	303	3,932
MARENGO	228	26	102	7	41	378
MARION	370	49	84	16	35	505
MARSHALL	851	136	288	28	63	1,230
MOBILE	3,296	719	1,588	161	306	5,351
MONROE	198	37	118	14	14	344
MONTGOMERY	2,052	382	1,193	79	205	3,529
MORGAN	914	229	319	30	102	1,365
PERRY	134	18	64	4	35	237
PICKENS	170	27	113	14	39	336
PIKE	243	52	142	20	31	436
RANDOLPH	271	59	61	10	17	359
RUSSELL	273	38	128	16	17	434
ST. CLAIR	488	76	147	28	43	706
SHELBY	1,099	125	192	24	115	1,430
SUMTER	141	24	57	3	34	235
TALLADEGA	937	202	308	35	63	1,343
TALLAPOOSA	401	59	109	13	15	538
TUSCALOOSA	2,220	390	588	55	266	3,129
WALKER	853	104	102	16	70	1,041
WASHINGTON	171	20	96	7	12	286
WILCOX	151	32	97	3	22	273
WINSTON	291	41	62	10	25	388
TOTALS	42,349	7,692	14,288	1,495	3,843	61,975

# PURCHASED SERVICES

	Vocational Rehabilitation Service	Children's Rehabilitation Service	SAIL Service	Fiscal 2001
Counties	Expenditures	Expenditures	Expenditures	Total Expenditures
AUTAUGA	\$377,579.10	\$235,572.25	\$191,407.21	804,558.56
BALDWIN	657,825.01	143,029.43	186,258.44	987,112.88
BARBOUR	71,113.72	74,972.37	132,506.73	278,592.82
BIBB	187,584.49	35,571.47	47,244.67	270,400.63
BLOUNT	259,964.77	44,438.40	68,038.83	372,442.00
BULLOCK	35,490.73	23,163.16	0	58,653.89
BUTLER	161,429.17	38,379.74	72,896.48	272,705.39
CALHOUN	1,318,079.31	140,978.14	129,469.28	1,588,526.73
CHAMBERS	238,027.52	43,605.40	120,148.85	401,781.77
CHEROKEE	112,490.10	46,273.53	54,782.21	213,545.84
CHILTON	133,688.78	133,926.27	60,616.96	328,232.01
CHOCTAW	47,291.92	6,902.17	51,392.49	105,586.58
CLARKE	190,736.10	37,802.01	48,800.95	277,339.06
CLAY	137,690.04	15,851.09	11,034.23	164,575.36
CLEBURNE	177,486.48	25,493.44	13,608.60	216,588.52
COFFEE	220,247.13	67,375.71	86,620.07	374,242.91
COLBERT	359,293.51	64,572.61	33,077.78	456,943.90
CONECUH	96,123.70	19,166.19	36,855.43	152,145.32
COOSA	29,348.40	2,848.17	15.95	32,212.52
COVINGTON	244,461.77	84,240.39	287,783.89	616,486.05
CRENSHAW	146,480.55	7,507.70	84,303.49	238,291.74
CULLMAN	345,471.33	234,354.17	20,989.99	600,815.49
DALE	150,165.80	89,354.35	73,085.98	312,606.13
DALLAS	410,566.42	80,344.30	44,844.64	535,755.36
DeKALB	296,933.00	113,931.22	110,926.12	521,790.34
ELMORE	404,762.80	119,825.86	161,389.29	685,977.95
ESCAMBIA	159,411.89	20,577.58	110,342.29	290,331.76
ETOWAH	766,032.29	140,494.57	138,362.02	1,044,888.88
FAYETTE	230,457.01	25,946.77	44,042.12	300,445.90
FRANKLIN	160,393.91	42,992.36	28,289.95	231,676.22
GENEVA	54,988.15	38,602.78	111,482.11	205,073.04
GREENE	34,659.87	10,116.01	24,834.60	69,610.48
HALE	88,209.23	15,740.37	6,395.66	110,345.26
HENRY	35,058.84	12,669.49	34,721.47	82,449.80

# PURCHASED SERVICES

	Vocational Rehabilitation Service	Children's Rehabilitation Service	SAIL Service	Fiscal 2001
Counties	Expenditures	Expenditures	Expenditures	Total Expenditures
HOUSTON	\$440,762.25	\$114,089.31	\$286,469.62	\$841,321.18
JACKSON	351,240.81	78,957.42	50,555.23	480,753.46
JEFFERSON	4,942,559.40	1,725,267.47	1,115,044.02	7,782,870.89
LAMAR	196,773.91	30,196.25	59,145.14	286,115.30
LAUDERDALE	513,077.67	109,215.72	97,026.97	719,320.36
LAWRENCE	137,662.06	159,775.98	53,503.91	350,941.95
LEE	710,173.25	286,764.51	178,715.86	1,175,653.62
LIMESTONE	205,775.28	89,128.71	86,622.18	381,526.17
LOWNDES	154,587.33	22,510.37	15,612.18	192,709.88
MACON	134,780.27	40,162.35	22,926.51	197,869.13
MADISON	1,600,333.51	537,489.14	170,373.57	2,308,196.22
MARENGO	160,812.43	22,697.78	33,048.57	216,558.78
MARION	267,772.08	48,086.30	84,131.10	399,989.48
MARSHALL	358,258.57	254,985.77	49,944.25	663,188.59
MOBILE	2,237,998.98	905,233.29	1,044,289.94	4,187,552.21
MONROE	140,024.01	44,865.55	72,686.25	257,575.81
MONTGOMERY	2,983,022.49	838,923.43	529,364.47	4,351,310.39
MORGAN	514,812.62	171,800.03	158,518.01	845,130.66
PERRY	97,574.68	13,643.47	43,636.71	154,854.86
PICKENS	115,054.47	48,096.60	98,954.96	262,106.03
PIKE	149,375.80	44,504.94	128,512.20	322,392.94
RANDOLPH	129,654.97	22,155.47	69,992.28	221,802.72
RUSSELL	228,506.84	69,213.74	108,969.05	406,689.63
ST. CLAIR	575,754.85	188,203.44	95,600.85	859,559.14
SHELBY	221,209.67	105,330.58	102,530.95	429,071.20
SUMTER	48,740.56	13,249.18	10,784.27	72,774.01
TALLADEGA	401,705.69	83,445.42	145,117.19	630,268.30
TALLAPOOSA	356,906.59	57,698.94	71,188.72	485,794.25
TUSCALOOSA	1,914,693.51	167,325.93	280,519.74	2,362,539.18
WALKER	587,657.64	69,448.02	83,769.70	740,875.36
WASHINGTON	120,603.08	29,034.40	75,677.42	225,314.90
WILCOX	84,908.64	23,026.96	4,074.89	112,010.49
WINSTON	174,832.49	31,246.24	28,724.60	234,803.33
TOTALS	\$29,597,149.24	\$8,682,392.18	\$8,082,600.09	\$46,362,141.51

# FY 2001 GRANTS

Because we value maximum acquisition and efficient and effective management of resources, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services continues to seek funding from state and federal sources to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential. The following are grant highlights from FY 2001.

## Workforce Investment

In January 2001, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services was awarded an \$87,178.44 grant from the Youth Council of the Alabama Workforce Investment Board through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. The purpose of the grant was to implement two initiatives: (1) The Governor's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) and (2) the Transition Weekend Program. The mission of these programs was to develop independence, self-advocacy, leadership, and career/employment skills in all students with disabilities participating in the two programs. Both of these programs were carried out during summer 2001 on the campus of the Troy State University.

The Youth Leadership Forum is an innovative intensive five-day residential career leadership-training program for high school students with disabilities. Program activities focused on career planning, leadership development, community resources, technology resources, and information on disability history. Each student participant developed a personal career and leadership plan to be implemented when the participant returned to his/her home community.

The Transition Weekend program is a highly structured, though casual, weekend program designed to assist students who are blind or significantly visually impaired, and their families, in planning for the students' future independence and career. Participants received information about programs, technology and services specifically designed for adults who are blind or visually impaired as well as other appropriate community support services and resources available. Students and their families also received information about adult vocational rehabilitation services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired and resources and services available through the Alabama Career Center System. Facilitated assessment and individual planning activities resulted in each student developing a personal career choice and career and independence action plan to be linked, as appropriate, to each student's school Individualized Educational Plan, and vocational rehabilitation Individual Plan for Employment in their home communities. Planning for post-secondary education and life-long learning also resulted.

## Grant for Welfare-To-Work Program

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services was awarded a third follow-up grant in the amount of \$1,000,000 from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs to work in coordination with the Alabama Department of Human Resources to place 30-month TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families, formerly Aid to Families with Dependent Children) recipients, noncustodial parents and children aged out of foster care into unsubsidized employment.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services has expanded the

Welfare-to-Work program from 20 counties to 35 counties and from seven to 12 Welfare-to-Work counselors.

Many individuals residing in the 35 counties live in rural areas, especially in west central Alabama, an area of poverty and high unemployment. The targeted service population includes individuals with learning disabilities, mental retardation, mental illness and substance abuse. Many individuals have undiagnosed cognitive impairments that have limited their ability to participate in traditional skill assessments, adult literacy programs, job readiness and job training programs. Individuals with undiagnosed cognitive disabilities experience repeated frustration and failure in training programs and employment. A fundamental gap in the service delivery system for these individuals is the lack of a diagnostic and prescriptive assessment of the impediments to employment related to the disability. Diagnostic and prescriptive assessments not only determine significant barriers to employment, but provide information for appropriate interventions, strategies, accommodations and other services needed for successful job placement in a "work first" program. This information is essential for the participant to have informed choice and be a full partner in developing his/her employment plan.

ADRS is an active partner at the state and local level in the development and implementation of the Alabama Career Center System. It is the intention of ADRS to orient and educate all WTW (Welfare to Work) participants to the Alabama Career Center System to advance the development of their self-sufficiency. The project uses a "work first" philosophy but recognizes that entry-level jobs are merely the beginning. Just as it is with all people with disabilities, TANF recipients need a career, not just a job to achieve self-sufficiency. Guided use of the One-Stop Center services encourages development of the participant's self-sufficiency and provides a source of information and services to encourage life-long learning and self-empowerment.

This project model is to fit programs to meet the employment needs of the participant and not fit participants to programs.

During the last fiscal year, 806 consumers were referred and of these, 692 participated in some aspects of the Welfare-to-Work program. Two hundred forty-three entered competitive employment. Of these, 68 have worked for six months or longer.

## Integrated Genetic Services Grant

ADRS is now in the final year of a three-year grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau to improve the integration of health services for infants and young children with spina bifida, cleft lip and palate, and other serious genetic conditions. The grant award of \$175,000 for three years funds a genetics demonstration project for Mobile, Baldwin and Washington counties to improve early identification of these genetic conditions at birth and prior to birth. The purpose of early identification is to ensure timely referral to a coordinated system of health and related services to improve health outcomes for these children. The project is exploring the use of enhanced information systems to coordinate care between agencies. A nurse in the Mobile Children's Rehabilitation Service office is serving as

# FY 2001 GRANTS

care coordinator for up to 30 children in conjunction with the grant, seeking to educate families about the long-term implications of the conditions and the importance of following physicians' recommendations. The care coordinator also assists in linking families to community-based services and support.

## In-Service Training

This \$155,827 grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration plus \$17,314 in the state matching monies enabled the department to provide prescriptive professional development and training opportunities to staff members. Staff training is linked to specific job tasks that enhance employee job performance in providing services to people with disabilities.

This year is the first of five of a new grant fund cycle. Beginning in October 2001, the grant included additional funding of \$69,345 specifically for the purpose of establishing a video conferencing system for the department. ADRS is the first department in Alabama's state government to have this specific ability to link all of the department's offices statewide. During this first year, 10 conference rooms were equipped with cameras and monitors. In addition, 14 desktop cameras also were installed. The initial funding year also provided necessary funds for enhancing the department's computer network and infrastructure capabilities, making it possible for the audio-visual technology to work without compromising the flow of data necessary for our case management and financial systems.

The funding for the video conferencing system is for the purpose of providing training to staff, connecting offices around the state for conference and meeting purposes, and to allow the opportunity for distance education, linking college and university programs to staff attending post-graduate programs. This funding level will continue for the entire five years of the grant's funding cycle.

## Hemophilia

Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) receives a grant from Hemophilia of Georgia which provides funds for comprehensive care for persons with bleeding disorders. The grant is funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The total amount of grant monies is \$28,700.

Also in FY 2001, CRS received special funding through Hemophilia of Georgia to establish three educational resource centers for people with hemophilia and related bleeding disorders. Because of this \$10,000 grant, each hemophilia treatment center in Birmingham, Mobile and Montgomery received equipment and educational materials which are available to clients and their families.

## Independent Living/Project OASIS

The Older Alabamians System of Information and Services (OASIS) was awarded \$274,464 in Title VII Chapter 2 formula funds for FY 2001. The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services provided \$30,496 to expand services to older adults with visual problems. These funds enabled the program to serve 1,024 consumers in 2001, providing rehabilitation teaching services, low-vision services, transportation to low-vision clinics, orientation and mobility services, peer support, support groups, and reader services.

Many older consumers have lost vision as a result of age-related changes to the eye. Services provided through the OASIS Program enabled older adults who are visually impaired to live independently within their home for as long as possible. The Alliance on Aging Research indicates that vision impairment is one of the top four reasons older Americans lose their independence, costing \$26 billion annually for increased medical and long-term care. OASIS is a good investment for the state, allowing older visually impaired individuals to maintain their independence, costing approximately \$500 per person per one-time expenditure.

## STAR (Statewide Technology Access and Response)

STAR (Statewide Technology Access and Response System for Alabamians with Disabilities) is Alabama's technology-related assistance project. STAR received an eighth-year award of \$516,468 from the U.S. Department of Education/National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

STAR's grassroots organization, TechNet, (comprised entirely of consumers) directly provided advocacy and/or technology information assistance to approximately 2,400 consumers (an increase from last year) and approximately 600 professionals. This assistance included training seminars, technology demonstrations and referral recommendations.

In FY 2001 the Equipment Recycling Center, a STAR project, showed a 22 percent increase in the number of devices refurbished and loaned to individuals in need.

The Ability Loans program, a collaborative effort with SouthTrust Bank, made a total of approximately \$85,000 low-interest financial loans to Alabamians to purchase assistive technology.

During the last fiscal year, STAR's most successful project was *Enhancing Access and Attitudes (ETA)*. During this reporting period, ETA was presented to more than 3,300 students ranging from ages 5-16 in addition to teachers and school administrators.

## Technology Loan Closet (TLC)

A new program administered through the Children's Rehabilitation Service is opening new opportunities for those with language impairments. The Technology Loan Closet (TLC) program is being funded through a two-year, \$50,000 grant from the Calhoun County Community Foundation's Stringfellow Health Fund and various other matching grants. People of all ages with speech and language impairments can borrow a wide range of equipment, suited to age and ability, for a four-week period, to determine whether they should buy it. During FY 2001, some 37 pieces of communication equipment were loaned to residents of Calhoun County.

## FORMULA GRANTS

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services receives several allotments from the federal government to develop and administer federal rehabilitation programs on the state level. The following formula grant awards indicate those program allotments and accomplishments.

## Independent Living Service

Some \$362,345 from the Rehabilitation Services Administration

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*Continued on next page*

# FY 2001 GRANTS

allowed Independent Living Service to provide independent living skills training, advocacy, peer support and information and referral to 515 clients across the state. These services are provided by independent living specialists. The services provided are monitored quarterly by the State Independent Living Council, which develops a plan for Independent Living Services every three years.

In addition to providing direct services, the independent living specialists work closely with community organizations to ensure access to and local community support for independent living services for clients in communities across the state.

## **Supported Employment**

FY 2001 marked the second year of the implementation of the Milestones payment system. Twenty-six agencies across the state provided supported employment under Milestones. Some 1,122 individuals participated in supported employment during this period. As a result of the comprehensive supported employment services that included community-based assessments, job development and placement, and job coaching, as well as long-term support services, 279 individuals were successfully closed into employment. This represents an increase of approximately 15 percent over last year's successful supported employment closures. The quality of supported employment services in Alabama continues to improve as a result of Milestones. The improved quality of services, which incorporates more consumer satisfaction and employer satisfaction prior to case closure, has resulted in increases in both average hourly wages and hours worked per week. Individuals working in FY 2001 as a result of their participation in supported employment averaged more than 23 hours per week and earned an average of \$5.71 per hour.

Much credit for the improved quality of supported employment services in Alabama and the increasing number of successful employment outcomes can be attributed to the excellent training that our department has endorsed and sponsored for the past four years. ADRS was fortunate to establish a relationship with Virginia Commonwealth University in 1998 to develop a certificate-based training curriculum on "best practices" in supported employment. This training has been very popular and a huge success. To date, more than 200 VR counselors, Milestones job coaches, Transition job coaches, unit supervisors, and others have successfully completed this training. This training continues to be provided twice a year. Fortunately, the Alabama Chapter of the National Association for Persons in Supported Employment (AL-APSE) has grown tremendously and, with the support of ADRS, was successful in obtaining an employment grant through the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities which now funds this training.

The utilization of the Medicaid Waiver in funding supported employment was also addressed and piloted in FY 2001. This program will now enable agencies to utilize both the ADRS Milestones payment system and the Medicaid Waiver to fund the costs of providing supported employment to individuals with the most significant disabilities in Alabama. In addition, the

waiver will enable agencies to provide very intensive long-term supports to those individuals who might otherwise be unable to work due to the severity of their disabilities.

## **State of Alabama Client Assistance Program (SACAP)**

This \$155,307 grant from the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration is the sole funding source for the State of Alabama Client Assistance Program. SACAP is an advocacy service that works cooperatively with Vocational Rehabilitation Service to assist people who have questions about or problems with their vocational rehabilitation programs. SACAP assisted 37 individuals in fiscal year 2001.

## **ADRS Alabama Work Incentives Network (ALA-WIN)**

This \$475,000 one-year renewal grant (up to five years) was awarded in July 2001 by the Social Security Administration to develop and implement a statewide program that assists Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries between the ages of 14 and 64 in understanding their work options so that they may make more informed choices regarding employment. ADRS received \$300,000 of the grant to assist recipients/beneficiaries in 51 counties. Birmingham Independent Living Center and United Cerebral Palsy received \$175,000 to cover the remaining 16 counties of the state.

ADRS hired four benefits specialists, one senior benefits specialist and a referral coordinator. The four specialists are housed in VR offices in Huntsville, Mobile, Tuscaloosa, Dothan and the senior specialist and the referral coordinator are located in the State Office in Montgomery. A toll-free number was installed in the State Office for the program and for routing calls to the appropriate specialist.

## **Traumatic Brain Injury**

Children's Rehabilitation Service received a Demonstration Grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau in 1997. The goal of this grant was to expand Alabama's Interactive Community-Based Model to a statewide service system designed to foster optimal outcomes for children with TBI and their families. During the first three years, CRS received \$612,000 federal dollars to support two statewide pediatric TBI training conferences, assessment and linkage to services for 226 children/youth and their families, and development of a system of coordinated services from pre-discharge to community re-entry. In 2000, ADRS received an additional \$100,000 to develop a TBI Registry in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Public Health and conduct public awareness activities for the registry.

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Alabama Department of  
**REHABILITATION SERVICES**